RV BUSINESS

FROM THE EDITORS OF TL ENTERPRISES DECEMBER 1982 $1.50

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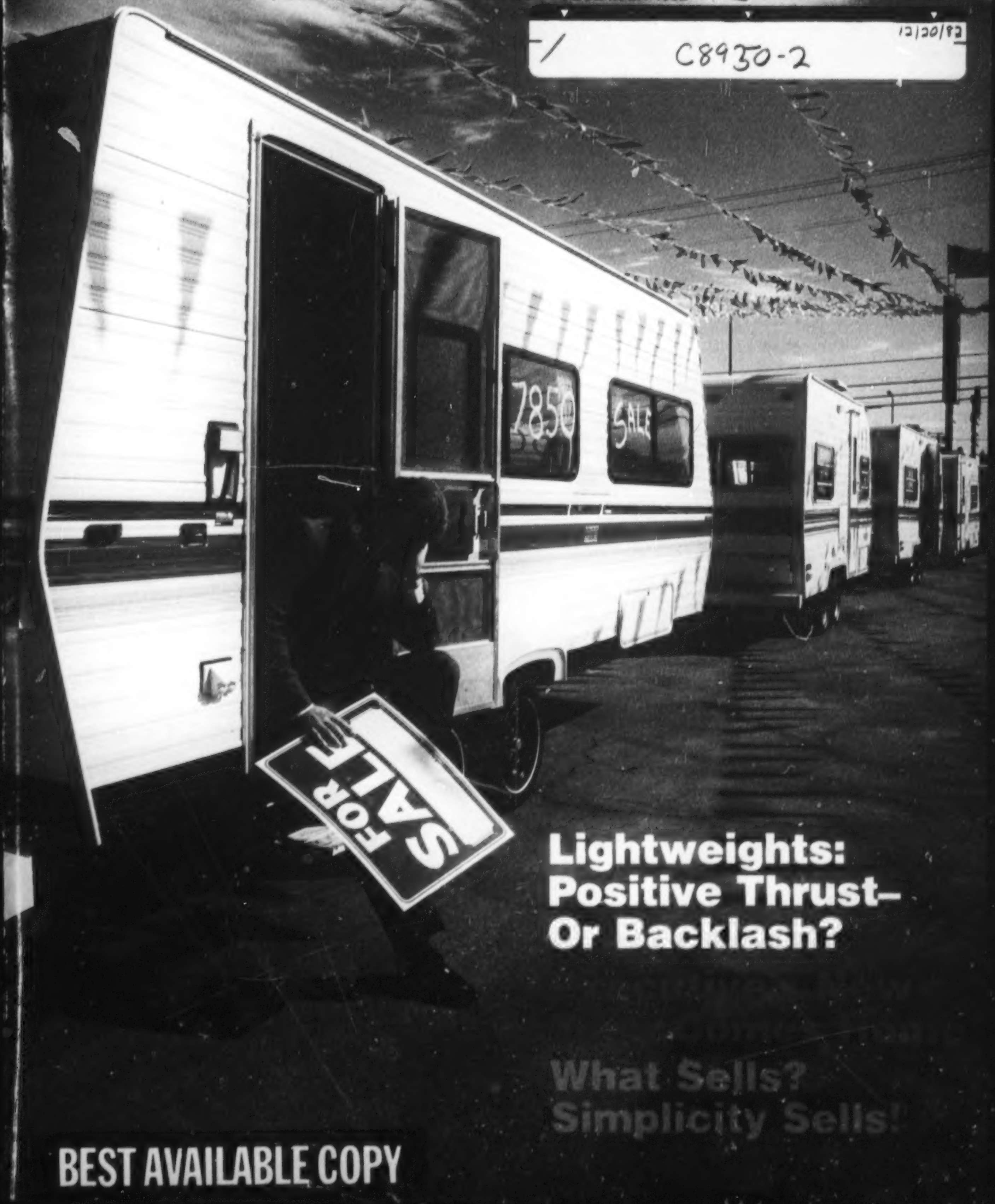

Lightweights: Positive Thrust– Or Backlash?

What Sells? Simplicity Sells!

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RVBUS

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52 DEMO DRIVE

26 **Backlash** *by Don Wright*
Going back to heavyweights on the production lines

28 **Lightweights** *by John Thompson*
Dealers' viewpoint on lightweights. Do they sell?

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NESS

DECEMBER [illegible] NO. [illegible]

26 BACKLASH

38 **Simplicity Sells** *by Gaylord Maxwell*
Fleetwood goes back to the basics

46 **Mike Hill Comes Home** *by John Thompson*
The new executive at Executive

52 **Demo Drive** *by Gaylord Maxwell*
Giving your customers that important experience

Departments and Columns

6 EDITORIAL
9 LETTERS
14 INSIDE ELKHART
16 ROVING EYE
17 SELL YOURSELF
20 RV PEOPLE
65 PRODUCT SPOTLIGHT
74 AD OF THE MONTH
76 CALENDAR
78 PROFITMAKERS

18 **FACTS AND FIGURES**
Barometer, Associations, Perspective, Shipments
59 **INDUSTRY NEWS**
Newsbreaks, RVDA, Promotions
86 **HARDISON INSTITUTE**
Oertle Column

RVIA

RECREATION VEHICLE DEALERS ASSOCIATION OF NORTH AMERICA

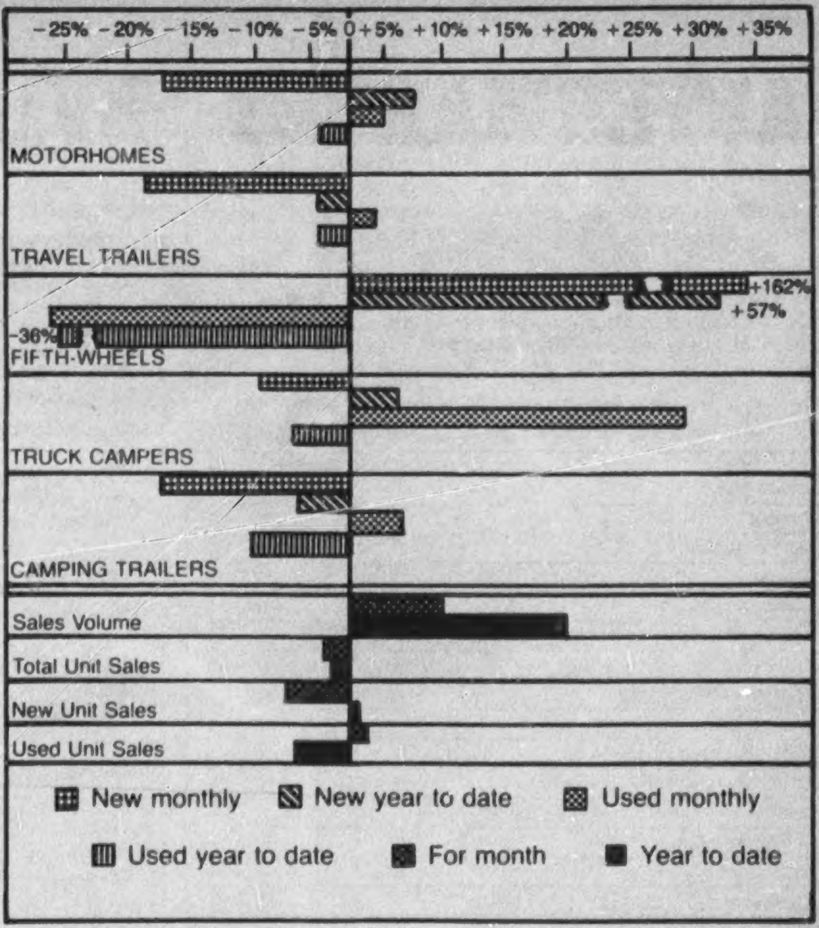
WAREHOUSE DISTRIBUTORS ASSOCIATION FOR LEISURE AND MOBILE PRODUCTS, INC.

BPA

NCOA

ON THE COVER: The lightweights have not been the movers and shakers the industry expected them to be. Dealers and manufacturers now look upon them with mixed emotions. RVB probes the issue beginning on page 26. Photo: Imagics.

PERSPECTIVE



The summer ended rather flat. September reports from RVB's Dealer Advisory Board (DAB) show that slightly more dollars were taken in than in the corresponding month last year, but unit sales were fewer. The figures for the month follow a slightly downward trend that has been evident for two months.

Although RV retail sales seem to be slightly off for most dealers, they are remarkably strong in view of the present economy. A drop of only 2% in unit sales for the year-to-date is strong indication that in spite of a constant barrage of statistics indicating that American business is falling apart, the RV industry is holding its own considerably better than most.

Profits overall are reported to be generally weaker for the month than normal, due primarily to close-out prices for the end of the season.

Motorhomes:

Since they are the most expensive RV type, one might think sales of motorhomes would drop more than others. That isn't the case. New unit sales are still running ahead of '81, and used units are only slightly down.

Used units are still moving exceptionally well. Many dealers are having a supply problem, and they're hustling to try to meet their customers' demands. Good, clean units bring premium prices.

Most new unit sales involve trades. The new buyer just isn't in the marketplace.

Travel Trailers:

The unit sales drop in this category has increased in the past three months after an exceptionally nice start early in the year. New unit sales have dropped into the minus column for both the month and year-to-date. Used sales have also fallen into the minus column for the year; however, profits are still strong.

Truck Campers:

Sales were exactly the same for this September as for last. That does not reflect a trend that has been apparent in this category this year. Sales had been up considerably, and they still are for the year-to-date. Perhaps the weakening of the trend is further indication of the difficulty of the workingman to come up with the money to buy expensive toys.

The high cost of new, heavy-duty trucks undoubtedly has a lot to do with camper sales. The required outlay of more than $20,000 for a truck and camper combination (new) is heavy.

Folding Trailers:

New unit sales were down considerably for the month, and have fallen into the minus column for the year-to-date. Used sales are off for the year also.

As with travel trailers, the fold-downs took a turn for the worse after a strong start for the year. Undoubtedly, the continuing decline of the workingman's economic situation has been the chief factor.

Fifth-Wheels

This is the only category with a fabulous percentage picture. Even though unit sales aren't high, the fact that the fiver seems to be more than holding its own in today's marketplace is vivid testimony of its potential in a dealer's inventory.

Although the majority of fifth-wheels sold are large, one DAB dealer does extremely well with small ones.

SHIPMENTS

AFTERMARKET

Whether RVers are storing their RVs for the winter, or putting them in action as the get-away vehicle to escape the chills of winter, antifreeze sales may be picking up—6100 gallons reported this month, but all from one Advisory Board member! Additionally, our Aftermarket Advisory Board reported significant sales in hitches (1267), storage pods (152), connectors (175), sewer hoses (167), fans (523), barrel catches (238) and steps (60).

CATEGORY	NO. UNITS SOLD
AM/FM Stereo Tape	1
Antenna	1160
Auxiliary Battery	120
Awning	934
Battery Isolator	601
Fluorescent Lights	618
Generator	11
Portable Barbecue	48
Portable Toilets	1391
Roof Air Conditioner	2002
Smoke Detector	0
Tire Carrier	391
Tire Pressure Gauge	30
Toilet Chemicals	16,352
Trailer Jacks	1426
TV (Black & White)	0
TV (Color)	0
Vacuum Cleaner	4

RVIA, SEPT.

The marketing committee of the Recreation Vehicle Industry Association has announced that the total number of recreational vehicles shipped from manufacturers' plants during September 1982 was 18,600, down 4.1% from September of 1981.

The shipment figures released by the association are contained in a report compiled for the membership by RVIA's marketing committee under the chairmanship of John Agno of Stirling Power Systems.

RV shipments were as follows in Sept. 1982		Sept. 1981	Percent Change	Cumulative 1982	Cumulative 1981	Percent Change
TRAVEL TRAILERS	4000	4100	− 2.4%	42,700	43,800	− 2.5%
FIFTH-WHEELS	1100	900	+22.2%	9200	7300	+26%
TRUCK CAMPERS	300	500	−40%	4600	4200	+ 9.5%
MULTI-USE VEHICLES	7900	8600	− 8.1%	83,700	74,600	+12.2%
TYPE A: MOTOR-HOMES	1500	1100	+36.4%	14,600	11,100	+31.5%
TYPE B: VAN CAMPERS	300	200	+50%	3300	3100	+ 6.5%
TYPE C: MINI MOTOR-HOMES	1200	1600	−25%	14,300	14,000	+ 2.1%
FOLDING CAMPING TRAILERS	2300	2400	− 4.2%	26,900	28,600	− 5.9%
TOTALS	18,600	19,400	− 4.1%	199,300	186,700	+ 6.8 %

BUSINESS

FROM THE EDITORS OF TL ENTERPRISES JANUARY 1983 $1.50

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42 WATT

30 **Mel Shipp, 1983 Dealer Of The Year**
by Gaylord Maxwell
An unassuming, gracious gentleman from Chattanooga, Tennessee.

42 **James Watt, Secretary Of The Interior**
by Bob Longsdorf
An RVB exclusive: What are Watt's views on RVing and the RV industry?

46 **Sierra Club On James Watt**
by John Thompson
RVB interviews Denny Shaffer on Watt.

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SINESS

JANUARY 1983 VOL. 33 NO. 10

60 16.3 MPG

60 16.3 MPG At 50 MPH!
by Don Wright
Fleetwood introduces its new motorhome.
62 Larger Chassis Due
63 Independent Service Concept Network

68 Through A Glass Darkly? *by Bob Longsdorf*
The Center for Auto Safety launches an attack on the RV industry

Departments and Columns

6 EDITORIAL
8 LETTERS
12 INSIDE ELKHART
16 SELL YOURSELF
26 RV PEOPLE
74 CAMPGROUND TRENDS
76 WDA CONFERENCE
77 CALENDAR
79 PRODUCT SPOTLIGHT

21-24 FACTS AND FIGURES
Barometer, Perspective, Associations, Shipments

71 INDUSTRY NEWS
Newsbreaks, RVDA, Industry Input, Inside Detroit, Promotions

RVIA
Recreation Vehicle Dealers Association of North America
Warehouse Distributors Association for Leisure and Mobile Products Inc
BPA
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ON THE COVER: Secretary of the Interior James Watt suffers the stings and arrows of environmentalists, the press and political activists. RVB is right on target with exclusive interviews from both Watt (page 42) and his protagonist, the Sierra Club (page 46). Photo: Bob Longsdorf. Composite: Skip Baker, Imagics.

PERSPECTIVE

Retail sales figures for RVB's Dealer Advisory Board (DAB) indicate mixed results both for the month and for the year. While unit sales are picking up for motorhomes and fifth-wheels, they're waning for travel trailers, truck campers and folding trailers.

On the plus side, more dollars are coming in. The 20% increase over last year-to-date indicates that buyers want higher-priced units. Obviously, the people who have money are spending. Unfortunately, buyers for more modestly priced merchandise aren't in the marketplace in sufficient numbers.

The used market is still very strong for most dealers, but a few are reporting surplus used inventory and low grosses.

INDIVIDUAL DAB MEMBERS SALES VOLUME	
For Month	15 up
	7 down
Year to Date	18 up
	4 down

SALES VOLUME		
For Month	This year $ 4,717,734	up 35%
	Last year $ 3,490,083	
Year to Date	This year $50,438,309	up 20%
	Last year $42,088,969	

TOTAL UNIT SALES		
For Month	This year 362	+ 2%
	Last year 356	
Year to Date	This year 4749	− 1%
	Last year 4804	

NEW UNIT SALES		
For Month	This year 213	Same
	Last year 213	
Year to Date	This year 2929	down less than 1%
	Last year 2934	

USED UNIT SALES		
For Month	This year 149	+ 4%
	Last year 143	
Year to Date	This year 1820	− 3%
	Last year 1870	

Motorhomes

NEW	For Month	This year 65	+48%
		Last year 44	
	Year to Date	This year 605	+10%
		Last year 502	
USED	For Month	This year 68	+19%
		Last year 57	
	Year to Date	This year 661	+ 4%
		Last year 638	

Compared with last October, motorhomes are doing exceptionally well—better than any other RV type. It's the only category with four plusses. Well-established motorhome specialists are running about normal, but some department store types that had almost dropped out of motorized for the past two years are coming back strong. Profits are generally rated good to excellent.

Travel Trailers

NEW	For Month	This year 68	− 7%
		Last year 73	
	Year to Date	This year 802	− 4%
		Last year 839	
USED	For Month	This year 49	−13%
		Last year 56	
	Year to Date	This year 671	− 3%
		Last year 691	

The slight downturn that travel trailer dealers have been experiencing hasn't changed. Unit sales are running behind those of last year for the year-to-date. It's a case of the interest being there, but the money isn't. Dealers report lots of lookers who are waiting for their incomes to become more secure.

For those who are making trailer sales, profits are generally good—a few report them better than ever.

Fifth-wheels

NEW	For Month	This year 21	+133%
		Last year 9	
	Year to Date	This year 201	+ 60%
		Last year 126	
USED	For Month	This year 5	+ 25%
		Last year 4	
	Year to Date	This year 55	− 36%
		Last year 84	

This is definitely the brightest spot in our report as far as percentages are concerned. It's possible that new unit sales for DAB dealers will be almost double those of last year.

Sales in this category are made to retirees. It seems logical that with the reduction in interest rates on CDs that more people with money in the bank will be inclined to spend it. Therefore, sales of this type should continue strong—as well as those of all big RVs.

Truck Campers

NEW	For Month	This year 4	−60%
		Last year 10	
	Year to Date	This year 126	−14%
		Last year 146	
USED	For Month	This year 11	+22%
		Last year 9	
	Year to Date	This year 120	−25%
		Last year 161	

Sales were decidedly down for the month, but not as bad as the percentages would suggest. The actual unit sale difference was only six, but the percentage is 60! Year-to-date figures definitely indicate that for our DAB, camper sales are sluggish at this time after a reasonably good start. Profits for the few dealers who reported sales for the month were good to excellent.

Camping Trailers

NEW	For Month	This year 55	−29%
		Last year 77	
	Year to Date	This year 1195	− 6%
		Last year 1271	
USED	For Month	This year 16	− 6%
		Last year 17	
	Year to Date	This year 313	+ 6%
		Last year 296	

The downturn in this category has gotten progressively worse in the past months. After a good start in the early part of the year, it is now apparent that the economic problems of the workingman have kept him from buying this popular mode of family camping. As with travel trailers, sales are directly related to the general economic picture.

Profits were rated from fair to good.

SHIPMENTS

AFTERMARKET

CATEGORY	NO. UNITS SOLD
AM/FM Stereo Tape	0
Antenna	480
Auxiliary Battery	52
Awning	403
Battery Isolator	605
Fluorescent Lights	393
Generator	2
Portable Barbecue	34
Portable Toilets	97
Roof Air Conditioner	271
Smoke Detector	1
Tire Carrier	370
Tire Pressure Gauge	11
Toilet Chemicals	4050
Trailer Jacks	445
TV (Black & White)	0
TV (Color)	0
Vacuum Cleaner	4

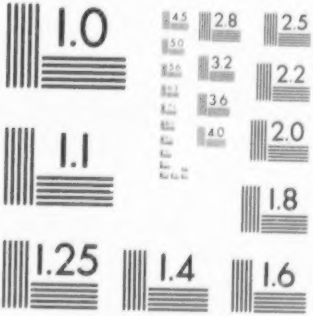
In addition to our regularly reported aftermarket items, our Advisory Board members reported sales on these additional most frequently sold items: antifreeze (gal)—15,748, dry easy chemical—1440, tape (rolls)—1099, hitches—1098, toilet tissue—400, propane regulators—400, water heater elements—400, hitch balls—325, antifreeze access—300, thermo couples—300, sewer hose—182, roof tents—150, storage pods—40. Aftermarket distributors who would like to participate in our *Aftermarket* report are invited to contact the editors at RVB, 29901 Agoura Road, Agoura Hills, California 91301.

RVIA, OCTOBER

The marketing committee of the Recreation Vehicle Industry Association has announced that the total number of recreational vehicles shipped from manufacturers' plants during October 1982 was 20,700, no change from October of 1981.

The shipment figures released by the association are contained in a report compiled for the membership by RVIA's marketing committee under the chairmanship of John Agno of Stirling Power Systems.

RV shipments were as follows in Oct. 1982		Oct. 1981	Percent Change	Cumulative 1982	Cumulative 1981	Percent Change
TRAVEL TRAILERS	4600	4500	+ 2.2%	47,300	48,300	− 2.1%
FIFTH-WHEELS	900	1000	− 10.0%	10,100	8300	+ 21.7%
TRUCK CAMPERS	400	400	–0–	5000	4600	+ 8.7%
MULTI-USE VEHICLES	9000	9800	− 8.2%	92,700	84,400	+ 9.8%
TYPE A: MOTOR-HOMES	1700	1100	+ 54.5%	16,300	12,200	+ 33.6%
TYPE B: VAN CAMPERS	100	100	–0–	3400	3200	+ 6.3%
TYPE C: MINI MOTOR-HOMES	1300	1500	− 13.3%	15,600	15,500	+ 0.6%
FOLDING CAMPING TRAILERS	2700	2300	+ 17.4%	29,600	30,900	− 4.2%
TOTALS	20,700	20,700	–0–	220,000	207,450	+ 6.1%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TESTING SHAPE VS. WEIGHT

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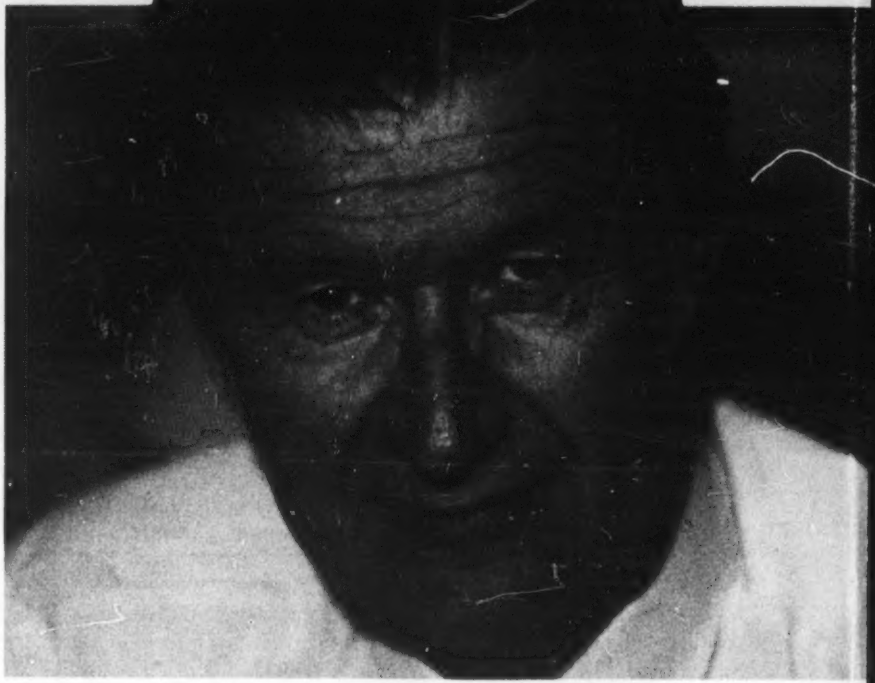

52 BOB STRAWN

36 **Shape vs. Weight** *by Don Wright*
Find out what the Hi-Lo test proved

44 **Mix and Match Design** *by Don Wright*
A new way of building RVs

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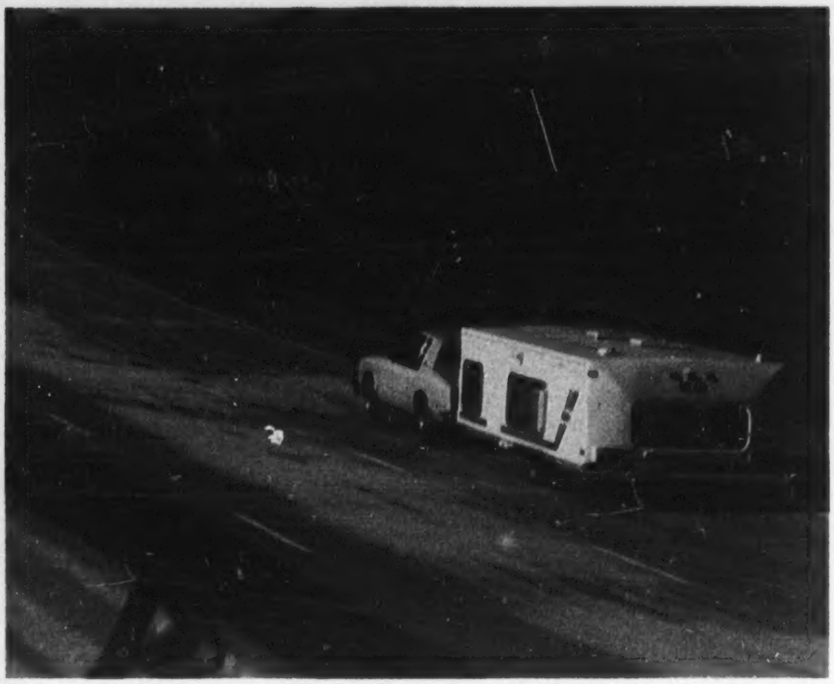

36 SHAPE VS. WEIGHT

52 **Bob Strawn** *by Gaylord Maxwell*
RVDA's new president puts his best foot forward

62 **The Dodger Report** *by Gaylord Maxwell*
RVB interviews manufacturers and dealers at the show

Departments and Columns

6 EDITORIAL
8 LETTERS
16 INSIDE ELKHART
19 ROVING EYE
20 SELLING YOURSELF
32 RV PEOPLE
73 CLASSIFIED
75 PRODUCT SPOTLIGHT
76 CALENDAR
82 AD INDEX

25-28 FACTS AND FIGURES
Barometer, Perspective, Associations, Shipments
67 INDUSTRY NEWS
Newsbreaks, Industry Input, Promotions, RVDA
83,85 HARDISON INSTITUTE
Campground Trends
Selling RVs

RVIA

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WAREHOUSE DISTRIBUTORS ASSOCIATION FOR LEISURE AND MOBILE PRODUCTS INC

BPA

NCOA

ON THE COVER: The controversy that has waged between proponents of aerodynamic styling and supporters of lightweight construction is demonstrated by this tongue-in-cheek painting by artist Darrell Mayabb. Hi-Lo's recent test may have the definitive answer. To find out, turn to page 36.

BAROMETER

GOOD SHOW(S)!

Reports from Louisville and Dodger look exceptionally good. The Louisville show occupied 15% more space than last year and dealer attendance hit 7000. Dodger space was also up 16%, and even though weather closed the basically outdoor show for a full day, public attendance fell only 3000 short of last year's 115,000 persons. Most manufacturers reported that attendees were serious buyers, and in many instances those makers who wanted to expand their distribution network were able to sign on quality dealerships.

HEATED TOPIC

Propane as alternate automotive fuel gets mixed reviews in the press because of well-publicized fiery explosions. Proponents, according to *Entrepreneur* magazine, blame such accidents on "inexperienced 'fly-by-nighters' unsafely converting cars to propane." The lucrative conversion industry is "one of the 10 hottest businesses of 1981," says the account. Tests by Ford and others, however, show that if a propane system is properly installed (and maintained) it is sometimes safer than gasoline applications. "There aren't any comprehensive statistics on propane, however, and it doesn't take more than a few bad accidents to deter potential users," the story summarizes.

BYE-LAWS

According to the Motor Vehicle Manufacturers Association of the U.S., 25,000 pieces of legislation that somehow make an impact on cars and motorized RVs are introduced annually. This represents about 25% of all bills introduced during the two-year timetable followed by most states. Fortunately, most of these do not become law, MVMA says. The main thrust of most deals with highway safety and environmental quality.

HIGH CLASS ACTION

The class action against Executive has been settled. President Mike Hill says the settlement will probably cost the company about $75,000 per year for the next three to four years.

NO FAST BUCKS

Deregulation of banking sources has scattered the nation's savings and caused the Federal Reserve to, at least temporarily, give up trying to control the economy through manipulation of the traditional M1 (currency and demand bank accounts), says the *Washington Post*. Instead, the Feds will attempt to control the elusive M2 that includes "savings accounts, time deposits up to $100,000 and money-market mutual-fund shares, among other things." In effect, this could mean that the customary "quick response" that the Feds enjoyed will be replaced with a less mechanized and less predictable economic effect.

LAME DUCK SEASON

Legislatively, the lame duck congressional session did nothing for the RV industry. Although the Product Liability Law didn't pass, it did get a favorable report from the Senate Commerce Committee; thus, the prospects for passage in '83 are good. Also hoped for in '83 is authorization of the four-day work week that gives people more time to recreate. And, while the several bills that would have taxed RVs as luxury items are all dead, they'll probably be resurrected as they are potent revenue sources. On the state level, lemon laws will surely be revived and in many instances passed. Where motorhomes aren't specifically excluded, these lemon laws will present confusion to consumers and expense to the industry.

IN BRIEF: Fifty-nine percent of the **National Association of Purchasing Management**'s executive members believe that 1983 will be a better year than '82, although 42% of the members intend to decrease capital spending. * * Increased sales of large motorhomes contributed significantly to **Winnebago**'s first quarter sales of $37.8 million (up from $27.9 million in the 1981 first quarter) according to President Ron Haugen * * **Intertherm** declares semiannual dividend of 9¢ per share of common stock.

Warehouse Distributors Association of U.S. and Canadian members for the 1982 third quarter (figures are not absolute; not every member responds to each question):

	Total USA & Canada	Region One	Region Two	Region Three	Region Four	Region Five	Region Six
3rd Qtr. Sales Vol.:* compared to '81	− 1.4%	+19.9%	+ 5.8%	+21.8%	−13.9%	+ 6.1%	−16.5%
Collection Days '81	21.86	25.93	22.70	25.43	30.30	24.71	38.21
Collection Days '82	27.6	24.86	23.58	24.11	25.75	26.91	39.11
Inventory On Hand (months)	3.29	2.95	3.76	4.06	1.92	4.05	2.3
Sales Per Employee (000 omitted)	$53.3	$63.1	$40.1	$53.2	$52.4	$47.7	$74.0
Gross Profit Range: High	—	27.6%	41%	29.1%	27.6%	35%	29.6%
Low	—	26.4%	24%	8.8%	19.8%	22%	20%

* *Third quarter U.S. and Canadian combined sales volume was $58.6 million in 1981 and $57.7 million in 1982.*

PERSPECTIVE

November was a *fantastic* month for many members of RVB's Dealer Advisory Board (DAB). Large motorhome dealers fared best but they were not entirely alone in a sales upsurge that matches or exceeds that of the beginning of 1982. Actually, in terms of percentages, fifth-wheels are by far the most booming type for the year. Both travel and camping trailers, as well as truck campers, are running behind 1981 in new unit sales.

The overall picture for dealers is definitely good. These two facts make that conclusion irrefutable: 23% more dollars were taken in this year over last by the DAB's 22 members scattered throughout the country, and more RVs—both new and used—were delivered.

INDIVIDUAL DAB MEMBERS SALES VOLUME	
For Month	15 up
	down
Year to Date	up
	down

SALES VOLUME		
For Month	This year $ 4,867,148	+60%
	Last year $ 3,049,088	
Year to Date	This year $53,992,943	+23%
	Last year $44,040,691	

TOTAL UNIT SALES		
For Month	This year 332	+31%
	Last year 253	
Year to Date	This year 5019	+ 2%
	Last year 4902	

NEW UNIT SALES		
For Month	This year 190	+36%
	Last year 140	
Year to Date	This year 3084	+ 4%
	Last year 2975	

USED UNIT SALES		
For Month	This year 142	+26%
	Last year 113	
Year to Date	This year 1935	+ less than 1%
	Last year 1927	

Motorhomes

NEW	**For Month**	This year 82	+95%
		Last year 42	
	Year to Date	This year 671	+16%
		Last year 580	
USED	**For Month**	This year 61	+30%
		Last year 47	
	Year to Date	This year 694	+ 5%
		Last year 663	

The whopping 60% increase in new motorhome sales over November of '81 has dealers puzzled but ecstatic. There's no explanation for the sudden upsurge. Both Class A's and Class C's sold well with the former doing best. Two motorhome specialists on the DAB posted new monthly highs for the year. Profits were rated good by most.

Travel Trailers

NEW	**For Month**	This year 44	−19%
		Last year 54	
	Year to Date	This year 825	− 4%
		Last year 857	
USED	**For Month**	This year 48	+14%
		Last year 42	
	Year to Date	This year 703	− 2%
		Last year 720	

With a 19% drop from November of last year and a 4% decrease year-to-date, it is obvious that travel trailer dealers are not sharing in the good fortune that has befallen motorhome dealers. Economic conditions are keeping the working man in a conservative mood even if he is employed. It will take job security and/or lower interest rates to get him in a trailer-buying mood again.

Truck Campers

NEW	**For Month**	This year 4	−43%
		Last year 7	
	Year to Date	This year 124	−15%
		Last year 146	
USED	**For Month**	This year 10	Same
		Last year 10	
	Year to Date	This year 159	− less than 1%
		Last year 160	

The 43% drop in new unit sales from November '81 looks worse than it really is. The drop was actually only three units, but with so few sales the percentage is inordinately high. However, the fact that only one DAB dealer moved new units during the month of November is dramatic evidence that it wasn't a camper month. Profits were excellent for the dealer who did sell four units.

Camping Trailers

NEW	**For Month**	This year 41	+41%
		Last year 29	
	Year to Date	This year 1253	− less than 1%
		Last year 1264	
USED	**For Month**	This year 13	+ 8%
		Last year 12	
	Year to Date	This year 316	+ 5%
		Last year 302	

Close-outs during the month brought the new unit sales total up nicely for the month. Sales are very close to those of 1981. That isn't all bad considering that last year was a pretty good one for the fold-downs. Most camping trailer specialists are running slightly behind last year's figures. Profits were rated from fair to good.

Fifth-wheels

NEW	**For Month**	This year 19	+138%
		Last year 8	
	Year to Date	This year 211	+ 65%
		Last year 128	
USED	**For Month**	This year 10	+400%
		Last year 2	
	Year to Date	This year 63	− 23%
		Last year 82	

The 138% increase for the month and the 65% increase for the year-to-date indicates the increasing popularity of this RV type. Buyers are primarily retirees seeking a means to enjoy the good life in the Sun Belt states. They have the cash, and the dealer who stocks properly and makes a special effort to get their business should get his share. Profits are rated good.

SHIPMENTS

AFTERMARKET

In addition to the items listed in the chart below, our *RVBusiness* Aftermarket Advisory Board Members noted the following items as good sales items for them during November of '82: Storage pods, hitches, sewer hoses, fans, steps, antifreeze and antifreeze accessories, propane regulators, heat tapes, toilet tissue, roof tents, water heater elements, thermocouples and Dry Easy chemical.

CATEGORY	NO. UNITS SOLD
AM/FM Stereo Tape	0
Antenna	509
Auxiliary Battery	244
Awning	456
Battery Isolator	608
Fluorescent Lights	371
Generator	6
Portable Barbecue	23
Portable Toilets	108
Roof Air Conditioner	560
Smoke Detector	1
Tire Carrier	289
Tire Pressure Gauge	32
Toilet Chemicals	5847
Trailer Jacks	575
TV (Black & White)	0
TV (Color)	0
Vacuum Cleaner	3

Readers are invited to let us know how this chart helps them, and/or how our reporting of aftermarket figures could be changed to provide better service. Write to *RVBusiness* Aftermarket Report, 29901 Agoura Road, Agoura Hills, California 91301.

RVIA, NOV.

The marketing committee of the Recreation Vehicle Industry Association has announced that the total number of recreational vehicles shipped from manufacturers' plants during November 1982 was 19,700, up 16.6% from November of 1981.

The shipment figures released by the association are contained in a report compiled for the membership by RVIA's marketing committee under the chairmanship of John Agno of Stirling Power Systems.

RV shipments were as follows in Nov. 1982		Nov. 1981	Percent Change	Cumulative 1982	Cumulative 1981	Percent Change
TRAVEL TRAILERS	3200	3000	+ 6.7%	50,500	51,300	− 1.6%
FIFTH-WHEELS	800	700	+14.3%	10,900	9000	+21.1%
TRUCK CAMPERS	400	300	+33.3%	5400	4900	+10.2%
MULTI-USE VEHICLES	9700	8600	+12.8%	102,400	93,000	+10.1%
TYPE A: MOTOR-HOMES	1600	1200	+33.3%	17,900	13,400	+33.6%
TYPE B: VAN CAMPERS	300	200	+33.3%	3700	3400	+ 8.8%
TYPE C: MINI MOTOR-HOMES	1200	1000	+20.0%	16,800	16,500	+ 1.8%
FOLDING CAMPING TRAILERS	2500	1900	+31.6%	32,100	32,800	− 2.1%
TOTALS	19,700	16,900	+16.6%	239,700	224,300	+ 6.9%

RV BUSINESS

FROM THE EDITORS OF TL ENTERPRISES MARCH 1983 $1.50

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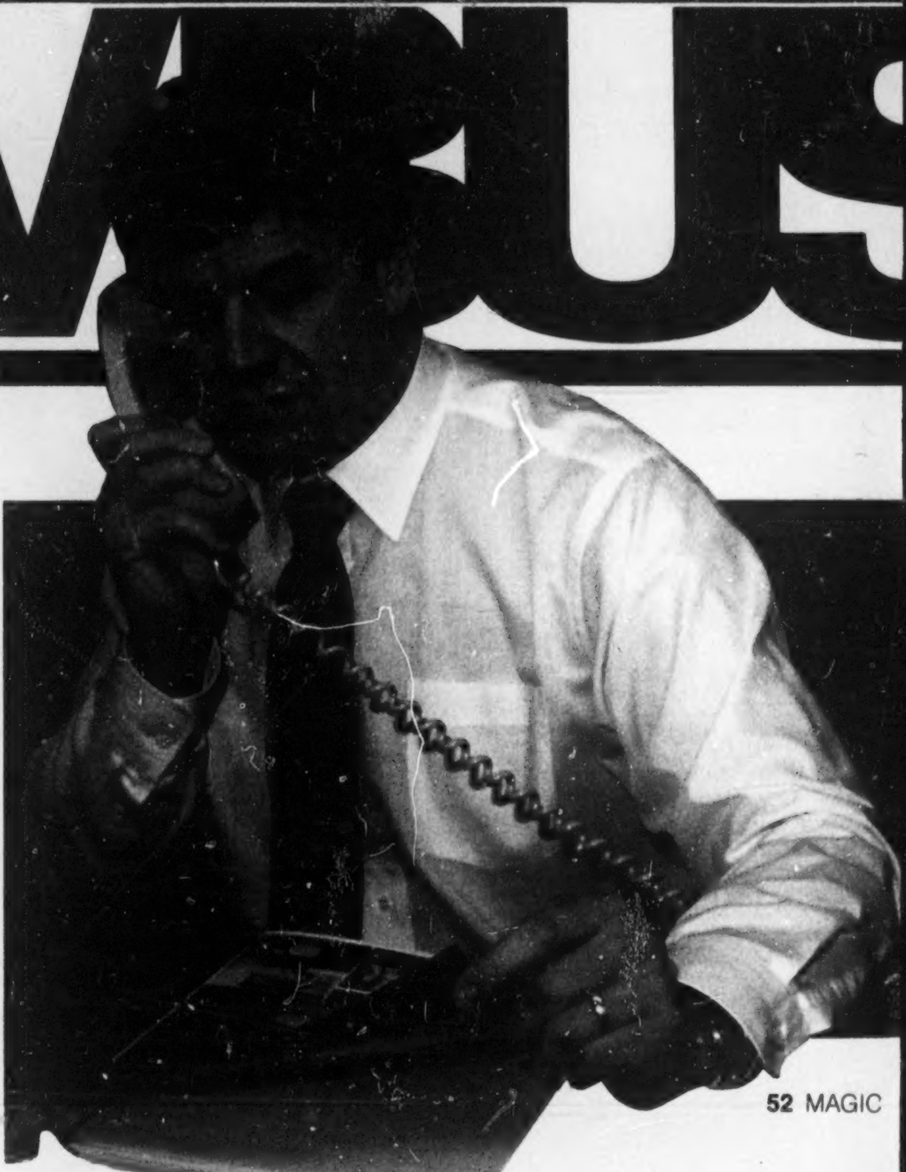
Can Suppliers Forecast RV Sales?

SUPPLIERS SAY YOUR
'83 RV SALES WILL B

Lookin' Good In Louisville

RVBUS

A TL ENTERPRISES PUBLICATION



52 MAGIC

38 **Suppliers Forecast RV Sales** *by Don Wright*
Gearing up for a steady growth period

46 **Louisville: Focus On Expansion**
Highlights of the national show in Louisville

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SINESS

MARCH 1983 VOL. 33 NO. 12

84 ZIP DEE

52 **Coachmen's Magic Touches Midas** *by Don Wright*
Midas looks forward to a golden future

58 **Canada Goes American**
Seeing the American marketplace in a new light

62 **Countermotion** *by Simon Schwartz*
Selling through recession

Departments and Columns

8 EDITORIAL
10 LETTERS
18 INSIDE ELKHART
20 ROVING EYE
22 GUESTVIEW
34 RV PEOPLE
78 PROFITMAKERS
82 AD OF THE MONTH
84 PRODUCT SPOTLIGHT
89 COURT OPINION
95 CLASSIFIEDS
98 AD INDEX
104 CALENDAR
106 RETALES
29 FACTS AND FIGURES
Barometer, Perspective, Associations, Shipments
71 INDUSTRY NEWS
Newsbreaks, RVDA, Promotions
99 HARDISON INSTITUTE
Malone, Campground Trends, The Tax Shelter

ON THE COVER: Supplier companies are very vocal about the RV industry's future. Are they valid predictions for the upcoming spring selling season? See page 38—and decide for yourself. Photo: Imagics.

RVIA
RECREATION VEHICLE DEALERS ASSOCIATION OF NORTH AMERICA
WAREHOUSE DISTRIBUTORS ASSOCIATION FOR LEISURE AND MOBILE PRODUCTS INC
BPA
NCOA

PERSPECTIVE

1982 ended on a high note for RVB's Dealer Advisory Board (DAB). Although December is traditionally the lowest month for sales, December of '82 ran 53% higher than the final month of '81. That's impressive, but even more significant is the fact that sales for the year were up 24% from 1981. Considering that we're in the midst of a recession and many businesses—even entire industries—are teetering on the edge, it should be apparent that the RV is firmly entrenched in the American way of life. It may not be a gravy train, but many RV dealers are in the right business at the right time.

In terms of percentages, unit sales were somewhat behind dollar volume, which reflects the popularity of more expensive rigs—especially motorhomes. New units held up better than used. After a very strong demand for all types of used units for two years, there has been a definite softening in many market areas for travel trailers, truck campers and fifth-wheels. Motorhomes and camping trailers did much better.

SALES VOLUME		
For Month	This year $ 4,131,120	+53%
	Last year $ 2,695,888	
Year to Date	This year $57,721,025	+24%
	Last year $46,700,011	

TOTAL UNIT SALES		
For Month	This year 238	+18%
	Last year 202	
Year to Date	This year 4955	+ 5%
	Last year 4707	

NEW UNIT SALES		
For Month	This year 165	+25%
	Last year 132	
Year to Date	This year 3021	+11%
	Last year 2718	

USED UNIT SALES		
For Month	This year 73	+ 4%
	Last year 70	
Year to Date	This year 1934	− 3%
	Last year 1989	

Motorhomes

NEW	For Month	This year 65	+76%
		Last year 37	
	Year to Date	This year 772	+22%
		Last year 632	
USED	For Month	This year 40	+48%
		Last year 27	
	Year to Date	This year 754	+ 6%
		Last year 713	

December was a bonanza month for some motorhome dealers. Both new and used units sold well. Class A's were favored four to one over minis. Year-to-date, the 22% sales increase was exceeded only by that for fifth-wheels (55%).

Dealers say that reductions in interest rates have had some bearing on sales. Next year should be a boomer for motorhomes.

Travel Trailers

NEW	For Month	This year 51	+46%
		Last year 35	
	Year to Date	This year 873	+ 2%
		Last year 856	
USED	For Month	This year 24	−14%
		Last year 28	
	Year to Date	This year 673	−11%
		Last year 755	

A sudden spurt of sales in December pushed the total for the year-to-date into the plus column—but just barely.

Used unit sales have dropped some from last year. A few dealers are reporting surpluses that they're willing to wholesale. Profits have dropped considerably. Still, the trailer business has more than held its own in very difficult times. The future looks good.

Fifth-wheels

NEW	For Month	This year 26	+18%
		Last year 22	
	Year to Date	This year 234	+55%
		Last year 151	
USED	For Month	This year 4	Same
		Last year 4	
	Year to Date	This year 66	−28%
		Last year 92	

Fivers were the real winner in 1982 in terms of percentage of increase over the previous year. Both big ones and little ones sold well. Thirty-five to 40-footers were popular with retirees, and the lightweight minis were relatively popular with younger families. The trend should continue.

Truck Campers

NEW	For Month	This year 10	+11%
		Last year 7	
	Year to Date	This year 169	+ 7%
		Last year 158	
USED	For Month	This year 4	−43%
		Last year 7	
	Year to Date	This year 160	− 3%
		Last year 165	

The mild resurgence in camper sales, which has been with us for a coule of years, continues. The year-to-date figures show new unit sales slightly up above the previous year. Used units dropped a bit, however. It has been the best year for campers in many years and there's no reason to believe that the trend will change.

Camping Trailers

NEW	For Month	This year 13	−55%
		Last year 29	
	Year to Date	This year 973	+ 6%
		Last year 921	
USED	For Month	This year 1	−75%
		Last year 4	
	Year to Date	This year 281	+ 6%
		Last year 264	

Sales in this category are usually poor in December. This year was an exception, only in that they were poorer than usual. But even with the big percentage drop in the final month, sales still ran slightly up from 1981.

There is some concern by some of the larger camping trailer dealers about the coming year because of the sales drop during the latter months of 1982. It could be a bit tougher in '83.

SHIPMENTS

AFTERMARKET

CATEGORY	NO. UNITS SOLD
AM/FM Stereo Tape	0
Antenna	876
Auxiliary Battery	276
Awning	950
Battery Isolator	434
Fluorescent Lights	535
Generator	7
Portable Barbecue	97
Portable Toilets	180
Roof Air-Conditioner	1284
Smoke Detector	0
Tire Carrier	395
Tire Pressure Gauge	21
Toilet Chemicals	5925
Trailer Jacks	578
TV (Black & White)	0
TV (Color)	0
Vacuum Cleaner	2

In addition to our regularly reported aftermarket items, our Advisory Board members reported sales on these additional most frequently sold items in December '82: 3M connectors (4400), hitches (1118), spark plugs (844), antifreeze (500 gal.), propane regulators (500), trailer connectors (475), roof vents (150), heat tapes (150), insulation wrap (100), sinks (150), sewer hoses (146), furnaces (75), storage pods (45), steps (41), fifth-wheel jacks (20), fans (12). Aftermarket distributors who would like to participate in our *Aftermarket* report are invited to contact the editors at RVB, 29901 Agoura Road, Agoura Hills, California 91301.

RVIA, DEC.

The marketing committee of the Recreation Vehicle Industry Association has announced that the total number of recreational vehicles shipped from manufacturers' plants during December 1982 was 18,300, up 23.7% from December of 1981.

The shipment figures released by the association are contained in a report compiled for the membership by RVIA's marketing committee under the chairmanship of John Agno of Stirling Power Systems.

RV shipments were as follows in Dec. 1982		Dec. 1981	Percent Change	Cumulative 1982	Cumulative 1981	Percent Change
TRAVEL TRAILERS	3300	2900	+13.8%	53,800	54,200	− 0.7%
FIFTH-WHEELS	800	600	+33.3%	11,700	9600	+21.9%
TRUCK CAMPERS	300	200	+50.0%	5700	5100	+11.8%
MULTI-USE VEHICLES	8900	6800	+30.9%	111,300	99,800	+11.5%
TYPE A: MOTOR-HOMES	1400	900	+55.6%	19,300	14,300	+35.0%
TYPE B: VAN CAMPERS	200	400	−50.0%	3900	3800	+ 2.6%
TYPE C: MINI MOTOR-HOMES	1200	800	+50.0%	18,000	17,300	+ 4.0%
FOLDING CAMPING TRAILERS	2200	2200	0	34,300	35,000	− 2.0%
TOTALS	18,300	14,800	+23.7%	258,000	239,100	+ 7.9%

RV

FROM THE EDITORS OF TL ENTERPRISES

APRIL 1983 $1.50

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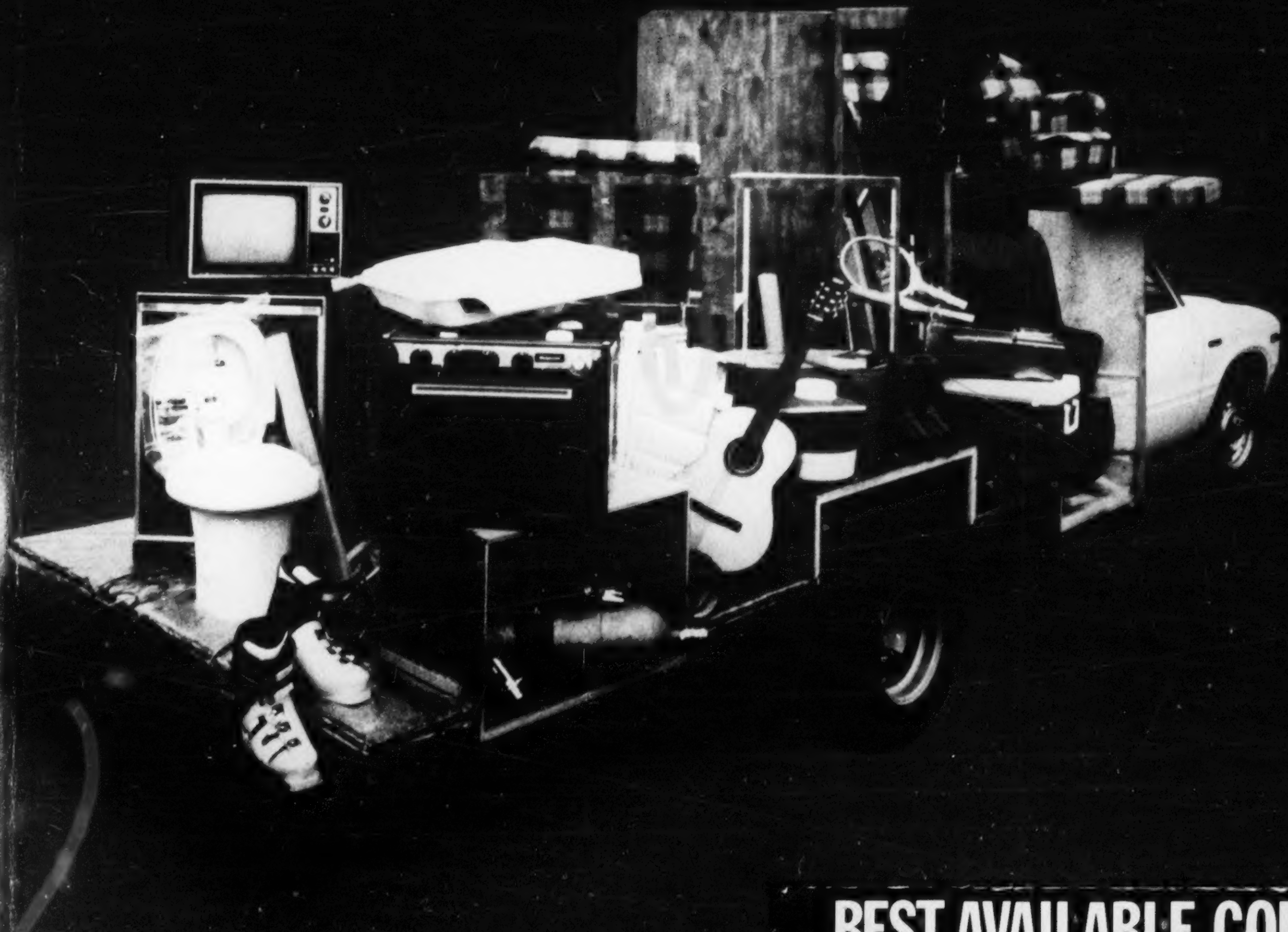
MICRO-MINIS:
HOW THEY KEEP HISTORY FROM REPEATING ITSELF



THE RV RENTALUTION IS ON!

THE CLASS A IMPACT—MAJOR OR MINOR?

RVBUS

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53 INVENTORY CONTROL

38 **Micro-Mini Waterloo** *by Bob Longsdorf*
How the industry is working to prevent history from repeating itself

47 **RV Rentalution** *by Gaylord Maxwell*
Find out about the changes in the rental industry

52 **Inventory Control** *by Don Wright*
Save money in your parts department

62 **Too Many Class A's?** *by Gaylord Maxwell*
Is business too good for your health

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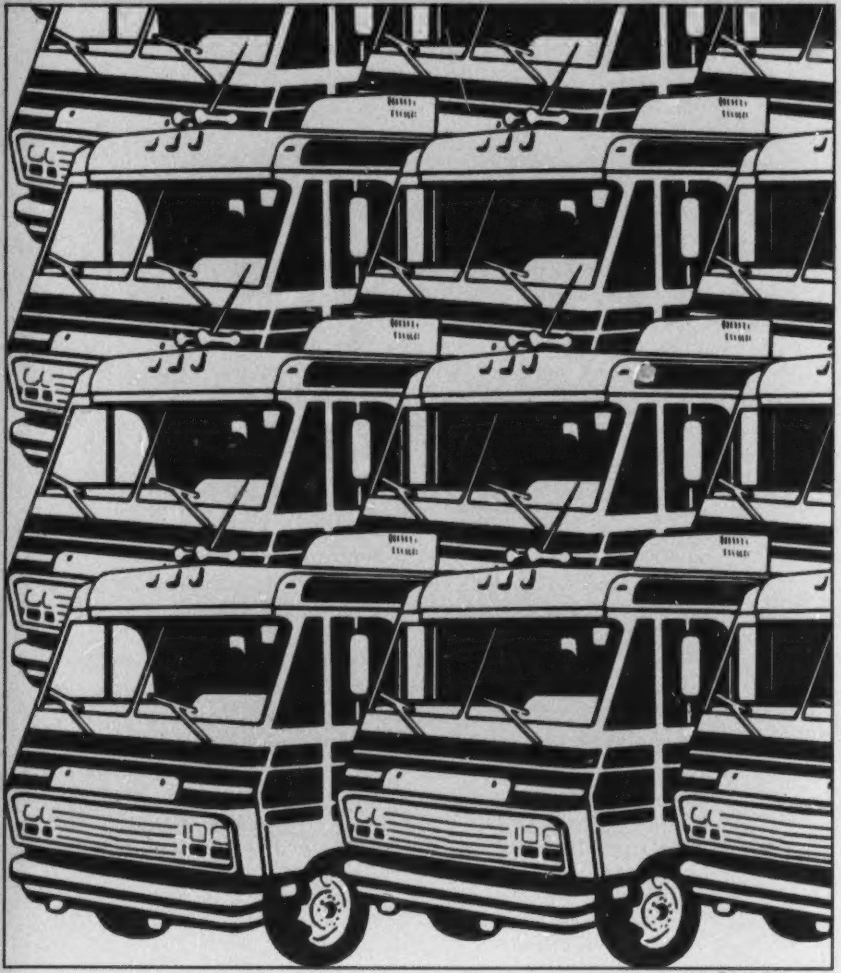
APRIL 1983 VOL. 34, NUMBER 1



62 CLASS A'S

Departments and Columns

6 EDITORIAL
8 LETTERS
14 INSIDE ELKHART
22 ROVING EYE
24 RV PEOPLE
27 GUESTVIEW
36 SELLING YOURSELF
69 AD OF THE MONTH
72 PRODUCT SPOTLIGHT
74 COURT OPINION
90 CALENDAR
94 CAMPGROUND TRENDS
96 PROFITMAKERS
106 AD INDEX
110 RETALES

17-20 FACTS AND FIGURES
Barometer, Perspective, Associations, Shipments
81-87 INDUSTRY NEWS
Newsbreaks, Industry Input, Promotions, RVDA

RVIA

RECREATION VEHICLE DEALERS ASSOCIATION
R V D A
OF NORTH AMERICA

WAREHOUSE DISTRIBUTORS
ASSOCIATION
FOR LEISURE AND MOBILE PRODUCTS, INC

BPA

MEMBER
NATIONAL CAMPGROUND OWNERS ASSOCIATION
NCOA
MARTINSVILLE

ON THE COVER: This obviously contrived photograph illustrates chassis overload—a major problem the micro-mini industry has suffered in the past. To find out how that industry is working today to prevent a repeat of history, see page 38. Photo: Imagics.

PERSPECTIVE

January sales for RVB's Dealer Advisory Board (DAB) indicate that 1983 will be a good year. Although figures for one month do not necessarily indicate trends that will continue there are several signs that last year's upturn will continue.

One trend that seems very obvious is the move toward more expensive units. Last year, dealers on our DAB took in 24% more dollars than they did the previous year with an increase of only 5% in units. In January of '83, the dollars were up 32% on a 14% unit increase.

The drop in used unit sales in January is a continuation of a trend that occurred in '82. However, most dealers still report a strong demand for used units; only a few complain that inventories are too big. Prices on used appear to be dropping in some areas—not much but definitely down.

The good news we are now hearing should give RV sales a boost. An upturn in the economy with a downturn in gasoline prices and interest rates is exactly the right formula for an RV sales boom.

TOTAL UNIT SALES		
For Month	This year 279	+14%
	Last year 245	
Year to Date	This year	
	Last year	

NEW UNIT SALES		
For Month	This year 179	+28%
	Last year 140	
Year to Date	This year	
	Last year	

USED UNIT SALES		
For Month	This year 100	– 5%
	Last year 105	
Year to Date	This year	
	Last year	

SALES VOLUME		
For Month	This year $ 3,816,350	+32%
	Last year $ 2,891,861	
Year to Date	This year	
	Last year	

Motorhomes

NEW	**For Month**	This year 63	+133%
		Last year 27	
	Year to Date	This year	
		Last year	
USED	**For Month**	This year 35	–34%
		Last year 53	
	Year to Date	This year	
		Last year	

Sales of new motorized units for the DAB shot off the board in January.

Used units, however, took a tumble, a situation caused more by lack of supply than lack of buyers. Sales of Class C's are picking up. If the trend continues, minis will again outnumber Class A's in sales.

Travel Trailers

NEW	**For Month**	This year 54	+69%
		Last year 32	
	Year to Date	This year	
		Last year	
USED	**For Month**	This year 35	+25%
		Last year 28	
	Year to Date	This year	
		Last year	

For a category that ended up the '82 season barely ahead of '81, January's percentages look real good.

All sizes seem to be selling. Dealers are saying that they're getting families back. Vacation trailers are selling again. Profits have been exceptionally good, according to the DAB.

The 25% increase in used unit sales for the month is considerably over the 11%drop during '82.

Truck Campers

NEW	**For Month**	This year 5	+67%
		Last year 3	
	Year to Date	This year	
		Last year	
USED	**For Month**	This year 7	–13%
		Last year 8	
	Year to Date	This year	
		Last year	

The 67% increase in new camper sales represents only two more units than last year. Three of the five sales were made by a dealer who did not stock campers last year. Perhaps more dealers should give them an honest effort.

Camping Trailers

NEW	**For Month**	This year 37	–29%
		Last year 52	
	Year to Date	This year	
		Last year	
USED	**For Month**	This year 9	–25%
		Last year 12	
	Year to Date	This year	
		Last year	

The substantial drop in both new and used sales in January is contrary to the general upturn in RV sales.

In early shows, two DAB dealers who have strong folding trailer departments had very good results. Perhaps the good news about the economy will get more families interested in camping—and new camping trailers.

Fifth-wheels

NEW	**For Month**	This year 20	–23%
		Last year 26	
	Year to Date	This year	
		Last year	
USED	**For Month**	This year 14	+250%
		Last year 4	
	Year to Date	This year	
		Last year	

New unit sales were down in January. That is a very unusual condition. Sales of fivers in 1982 were consistently up and actually finished the year up a higher percentage than any other category.

It is quite unlikely that we are seeing a downward trend. In fact, most fifth-wheel dealers were up a bit from last year. Only one—a very big one—dropped a few units. Used units sold very well.

SHIPMENTS

AFTERMARKET

In addition to our regularly reported aftermarket items, our Advisory Board members reported sales on these additional most frequently sold items in January '83: antifreeze (10,000 gal.), Dry Easy chemical (1440), hitches (906), connectors (555), propane regulators (400), heat tape (400), toilet tissue (400), water heater elements (400), thermocouples (300), antifreeze accessories (300), sewer hoses (280), ball covers (269), in-line fuses (200), roof tents (150), steps (53), pods (50), fans (39). Aftermarket distributors who would like to participate in our *Aftermarket* report are invited to contact the editors at RVB, 29901 Agoura Road, Agoura Hills, California 91301.

CATEGORY	NO. UNITS SOLD
AM/FM Stereo Tape	3
Antenna	811
Auxiliary Battery	82
Awning	1563
Battery Isolator	674
Fluorescent Lights	482
Generator	12
Portable Barbecue	70
Portable Toilets	225
Roof Air-Conditioner	533
Smoke Detector	19
Tire Carrier	788
Tire Pressure Gauge	24
Toilet Chemicals	7119
Trailer Jacks	573
TV (Black & White)	0
TV (Color)	0
Vacuum Cleaner	0

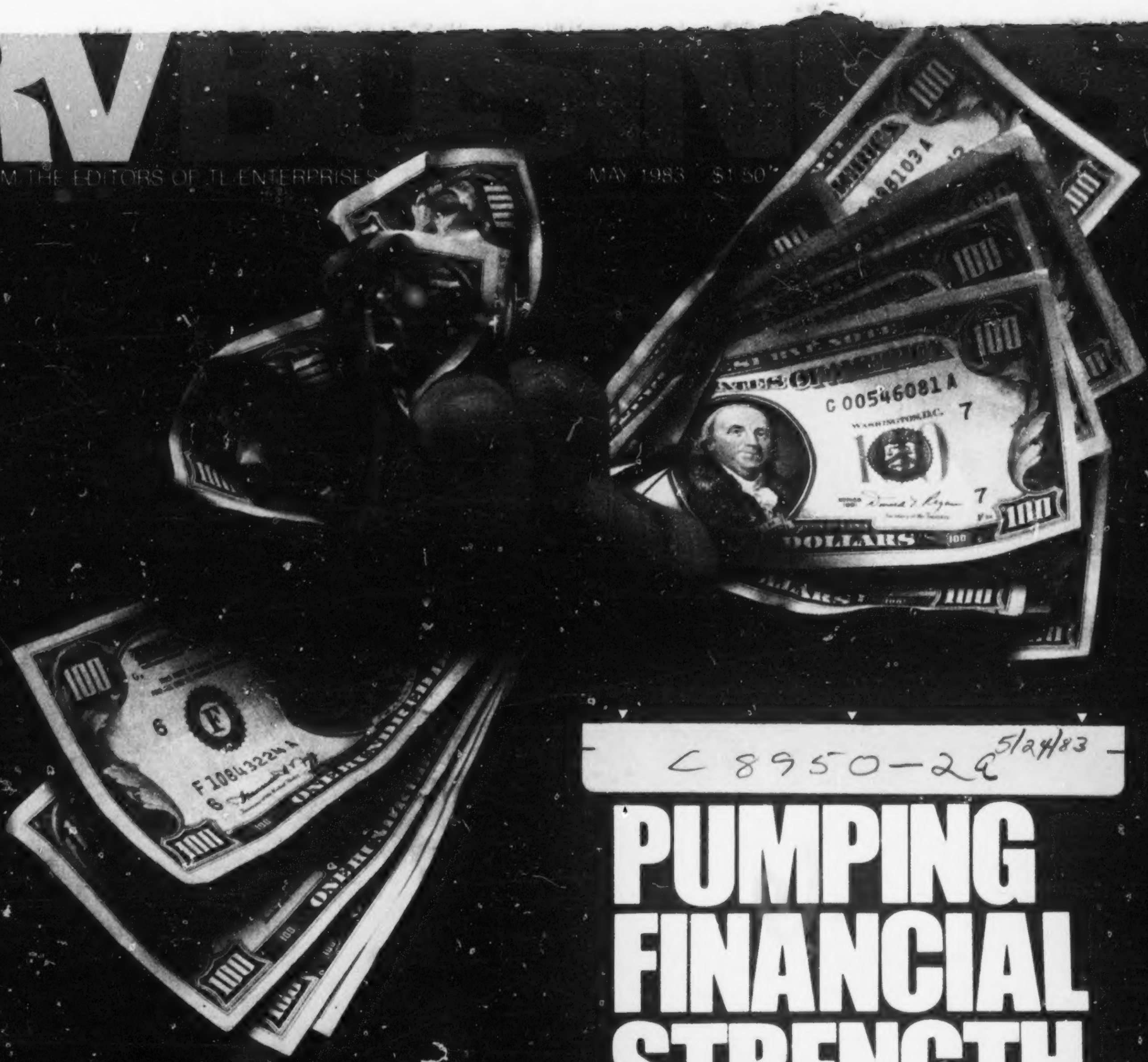
RVIA, JAN.

The marketing committee of the Recreation Vehicle Industry Association has announced that the total number of recreational vehicles shipped from manufacturers' plants during January 1983 was 24,000, up 62.2% from January of 1982.

The shipment figures released by the association are contained in a report compiled for the membership by RVIA's marketing committee under the chairmanship of Allen Yoder Jr. of Jayco, Incorporated, Middlebury, Indiana.

RV shipments were as follows in Jan. 1983		Jan. 1982	Percent Change	Cumulative 1983	Cumulative 1982	Percent Change
TRAVEL TRAILERS	4600	3600	+26.3%	4600	3600	+26.3%
FIFTH-WHEELS	1000	900	+11.1%	1000	900	+11.1%
TRUCK CAMPERS	300	200	+50.0%	300	200	+50.0%
MULTI-USE VEHICLES	11,800	5500	+114.5%	11,800	5500	+114.5%
TYPE A: MOTOR-HOMES	1900	1200	+58.3%	1900	1200	+58.3%
TYPE B: VAN CAMPERS	300	200	+50.0%	300	200	+50.0%
TYPE C: MINI MOTOR-HOMES	1500	1000	+50.0%	1500	1000	+50.0%
FOLDING CAMPING TRAILERS	2400	2000	+20.0%	2400	2000	+20.0%
TOTALS	24,000	14,800	+62.2%	24,000	14,800	+62.2%

RV BUSINESS
FROM THE EDITORS OF TL ENTERPRISES
MAY 1983 $1.50



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PUMPING FINANCIAL STRENGTH Into The Industry

Recession! What Recession?
Protecting Credit Ratings
Viewing Lending Policies

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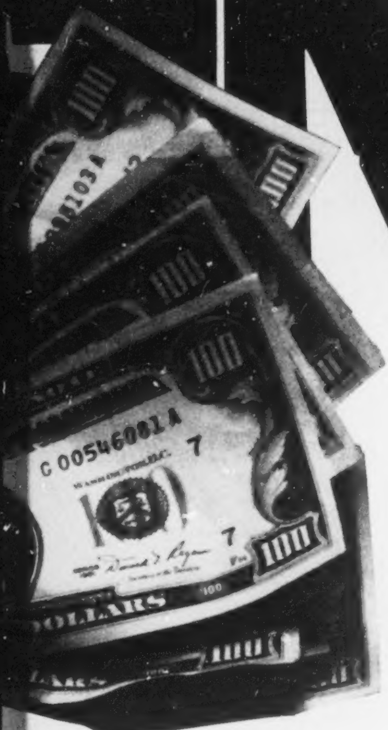

MAY 1983/VOL. 34, NUMBER 2

56 CREDIT

40 **Dealer Of The Year**
Cast your ballot for top dealer of your choice

46 **What Recession?** *by Bob Longsdorf*
Despite other industries, the RV industry is going great!

56 **Credit Ratings** *by David Leichey*
How to protect your credit ratings

64 **Lending Policies** *by Brubeck, Whiting, Richmond, Holcomb, Anton*
Illinois State University reports on lending institutions

76 **Lightweights In The Balance** *by Sheryl Davis*
Lightweight dealers discuss the other side

Departments and Columns

6 EDITORIAL
8 LETTERS
14 WRIGHT
16 MAXWELL
18 SCHWEPFINGER
24 GUESTVIEW
27 OERTLE
42 PEOPLE
91 AD OF THE MONTH
94 PROFITMAKERS
98 PRODUCT SPOTLIGHT
102 CALENDAR
105 COURT OPINION
106 AD INDEX

35 FACTS AND FIGURES
Barometer, Perspective, Associations, Shipments

83 INDUSTRY NEWS
Newsbreaks, Industry Input, Promotions, Shows

RVIA

RECREATION VEHICLE DEALERS ASSOCIATION OF NORTH AMERICA
R V D A

WAREHOUSE DISTRIBUTORS ASSOCIATION FOR LEISURE AND MOBILE PRODUCTS INC

BPA

NCOA

ON THE COVER: It has been said that the RV industry leads the nation in an economic turnaround. How strong is this industry, how can it be kept that way, and how do financial institutions see us? Find out by reading our articles on the subject beginning on page 46. Photo: Imagics.

BAROMETER

JOHN THOMPSON

THE LAW—ALMOST

The long-awaited bill to require licensing of truck campers in California has finally been introduced into the legislature and will likely become law by next year. The Recreation Vehicle Industry Association (RVIA), which has been lobbying for this measure, believes that other states will pattern laws after the California version. Currently, only Washington, Oregon and Ohio require camper registration. The measure will make camper loans more attractive to lenders since there will be clear title. Still undecided in California, however, is whether used units also should be mandatorially or optionally licensed.

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY

Winnebago reports first-quarter sales of $37.8 million compared to last year's similar period that registered $27.9 million in sales. The company, which celebrates its 25th anniversary this year, is also introducing its largest-ever motorhome, a 33-foot Class A. Additionally, 200 dealers have thus far signed to market Winnebago's new H-body van and motorhomes. In its move to diversify, the company now has eight lines of licensees that produce camping equipment, clothing and accessories.

SHARING

Coachmen completed a secondary stock offering of 500,000 shares for general working capital purposes, and reports that the Sportscoach division is leading the company in percentage of growth. Companywide 1982 year-end sales of $263 million were also reported, with 64% of that revenue coming from RV operations and an additional 17% from RV parts and accessories. Total sales were up 27.9% over the $206 million reported for 1981.

RV KIT

Kit reports RV sales up 12% for the 1983 first quarter as compared to the similar period last year. Total sales for the quarter, however, were down 15% at $4,696,000 due to a 35% decrease in manufactured housing sales. 1982 first-quarter sales were $5,504,000.

NEW PLANS

Travelcraft has launched a new dealer floorplan finance program that features no down payment, three "modest reductions of principle" and a lending rate of 2% below prime for the first 90 days. Additionally, the company announced a rental fleet financing program that requires a 5% down payment and interest on the balance of 1% over prime.

MONEY MATTERS

The February 1983 issue of *Money* magazine rated 100 publicly held corporations according to percentage of common stock price growth during 1982. Chrysler took second place, up 425%; Winnebago was in sixth place, up 253.3%; Fleetwood was No. 9, up 217.5%; Coachmen as No. 15, up 185.3%; American Motors was in 18th place, up 178.9%; and Ford took 40th place, up 132.1%.

IN BRIEF: HR 686, if enacted, would provide up to a $750 income-tax credit on the purchase of one new "highway vehicle" (including self-propelled RVs) made in USA. * * **Zimmer**'s fiscal'82 sales were $122.6 million (versus $121.2 million in '81), buoyed by good RV sales, but hampered by sagging manufactured home results. * * Sales of diesel autos declined 31.6% in 1982 says **Ward**'s Automotive Reports. * * **Intertherm** reports sales of $78 million for 1982, down 1% from 1981's $79 million. * * **Ayr-Way** has been purchased by **Trimm Industries** of Kendallville, Indiana. * * Savings at **credit unions** grew 17% in 1982, and these lenders held about 13.8% of all consumer loans at the end of that period. * * Drawings for show space at **South Bend** will be held May 4 for manufactured homes and May 5 for RVs; show dates are set for August 9-14. * * **Holiday Rambler** sues **PPG Industries** for selling an exclusively designed windshield to other manufacturers.

	Total USA & Canada	Region One	Region Two	Region Three	Region Four	Region Five	Region Six
4th Qtr. Sales Vol Compared to '81	- 8%	+32.1%	+26.5%	+39.7%	-30.1%	+10.8%	+14.1%
Year-End Sales Vol Compared to '81	+9.5%	+15.5%	+13.5%	+26.4%	+ 6.3%	+11.3%	- 6.7%
Collection Days '81	22.81	32	24.67	20.20	24.89	20.70	21.50
Collection Days '82	23.20	29	25.90	24.08	20.61	20.92	22.10
Inventory On Hand (months as of 12/31/82)	3.52	NA	3.83	4.16	2.01	4.39	2.52
Sales Per Employee (OOO omitted)	$33	NA	$33	$26	$46	$26	$32
Gross Profit Range							
High	47.2%	NA	42 %	30.8%	31 %	47.2%	30.5%
Low	9.3%	NA	22.6%	9.3%	22.5%	26.4%	20 %

Warehouse Distributors Association Survey of U.S. and Canadian Members for the 1982 Fourth Quarter and Year-End (note that figures are not absolute as not every WDA member responds to each question).

PERSPECTIVE

GAYLORD MAXWELL

SALES VOLUME		
For Month	This year $5,393,552	+31%
	Last year $4,105,091	
Year to Date	This year $9,268,755	+32%
	Last year $6,997,005	

TOTAL UNIT SALES		
For Month	This year 470	+22%
	Last year 385	
Year to Date	This year 722	+16%
	Last year 620	

NEW UNIT SALES		
For Month	This year 282	+32%
	Last year 214	
Year to Date	This year 448	+29%
	Last year 348	

USED UNIT SALES		
For Month	This year 188	+10%
	Last year 171	
Year to Date	This year 274	+ 1%
	Last year 272	

February was a great month for RVB's Dealer Advisory Board (DAB). Sales volume was up 31% from the preceding February and unit sales rose 22%. Consumers not only wanted more RVs than in the previous year, they wanted more expensive units.

Both new and used units are selling well, although the latter have experienced some slowdown. Used prices are still quite high, and dealers say the demand is there. Traditionally, used sales pick up with the coming of summer as families prepare for vacations. Quite likely we will see a hefty increase in the next two or three months.

Not only are dealers seling more, they're making good profits. Only one of the 22 DAB members reported poor profits in February, a situation he attributed to "cleanup" sale to get rid of some old, poor-quality units. Others generally claimed profits ranging from good to excellent.

The only negative sign on the horizon is that more people want to get back into the RV dealer game. What the industry doesn't need is a bunch of bandwagon riders.

Motorhomes

NEW	For Month	This year 73	+46%
		Last year 50	
	Year to Date	This year 132	+71%
		Last year 77	
USED	For Month	This year 58	− 9%
		Last year 64	
	Year to Date	This year 88	−20%
		Last year 110	

It looks like an exceptional year, particularly for the motorhome specialist. Minis are selling better than they have been for a couple of years; it's the Class A's that have gone wild. good financing is still the dealer's top selling tool. It's the only way to get the average man back into the marketplace.

Camping Trailers

NEW	For Month	This year 108	+71%
		Last year 63	
	Year to Date	This year 143	+23%
		Last year 116	
USED	For Month	This year 29	− 9%
		Last year 32	
	Year to Date	This year 36	−14%
		Last year 42	

After a somewhat disappointing start in January, the fold-downs made a dramatic comeback in February. The 71% jump for the month puts the year-to-date figure well above last year at this time.

Since it is often a family's first RV and since it is purchased by younger people, financing is crucial. Good terms along with lower gasoline prices and better job security should bring out the summer vacationers—and the camping trailer buyers. It should be a good year.

Travel Trailers

NEW	For Month	This year 64	−23%
		Last year 83	
	Year to Date	This year 115	− 7%
		Last year 123	
USED	For Month	This year 74	+35%
		Last year 55	
	Year to Date	This year 106	+22%
		Last year 87	

In an otherwise excellent RV picture, this is the only smudged spot. Why trailer buyers aren't out as strongly as they are for other RV types is unexplainable. Although new units are down, used trailers are selling very well.

Truck Campers

NEW	For Month	This year 13	+44%
		Last year 9	
	Year to Date	This year 18	+50%
		Last year 12	
USED	For Month	This year 17	+18%
		Last year 14	
	Year to Date	This year 21	− 5%
		Last year 22	

In both new and used, campers did well in February. The numbers may not be large in terms of unit sales, but the percentages are excellent. It proves that the demand for this RV type is increasing along with most others.

Fifth-wheels

NEW	For Month	This year 24	+166%
		Last year 9	
	Year to Date	This year 40	+100%
		Last year 20	
USED	For Month	This year 10	+ 66%
		Last year 6	
	Year to Date	This year 23	+109%
		Last year 11	

In terms of percentages, this category is "bananas." In actual unit sales, it doesn't reflect high numbers, however. But the fact is obvious that fifth-wheels are gaining in popularity. Retirees will keep this RV type popular.

SHIPMENTS

AFTERMARKET

CATEGORY	NO. UNITS SOLD
AM/FM Stereo Tape	0
Antenna	1264
Auxiliary Battery	183
Awning	1226
Battery Isolator	1013
Fluorescent Lights	600
Generator	11
Portable Barbecue	47
Portable Toilets	265
Roof Air-Conditioner	533
Smoke Detector	24
Tire Carrier	0
Tire Pressure Gauge	35
Toilet Chemicals	9962
Trailer Jacks	1124
TV (Black & White)	0
TV (Color)	0
Vacuum Cleaner	4

In addition to our regularly reported aftermarket items, our Advisory Board members reported sales on these additional most frequently sold items in February '83: electric connectors (800), sewer hoses (787), roof tents (600), sewer fittings (500), Scotch Lok wire connectors (500), cord adaptors (500), electrical switches (202), hitches (162), metal window cranks (120), putty tape (100 cases), storage pods (92), fans (84), steps (23). Aftermarket distributors who would like to participate in our *Aftermarket* report are invited to contact the editors at RVB, 29901 Agoura Road, Agoura Hills, California 91301.

RVIA FEB.

The marketing committee of the Recreation Vehicle Industry Association has announced that the total number of recreational vehicles shipped from manufacturers' plants during February 1983 was 24,800, up 46.8% from February of 1982.

The shipment figures released by the association are contained in a report compiled for the membership by RVIA's marketing committee under the chairmanship of Allen Yoder Jr. of Jayco, Incorporated, Middlebury, Indiana.

RV shipments were as follows in Feb. 1983		Feb. 1982	Percent Change	Cumulative 1983	Cumulative 1982	Percent Change
TRAVEL TRAILERS	4900	3800	+29.0%	9700	7600	+27.6%
FIFTH-WHEELS	1000	800	+25.0%	2000	1700	+17.7%
TRUCK CAMPERS	400	400	+ 0 %	700	600	+16.7%
MULTI-USE VEHICLES	10,700	5700	+87.7%	22,500	11,200	+100.9%
TYPE A: MOTOR-HOMES	2300	1400	+64.3%	4200	2600	+61.5%
TYPE B: VAN CAMPERS	500	300	+66.7%	800	500	+60.0%
TYPE C: MINI MOTOR-HOMES	1900	1500	+26.7%	3400	2500	+36.0%
FOLDING CAMPING TRAILERS	3100	3000	+ 3.3%	5500	5000	+10.0%
TOTALS	24,800	16,900	+46.8%	48,800	31,700	+53.9%

RV BUSINESS

FROM THE EDITORS OF TL ENTERPRISES

JUNE 1983 $2.00

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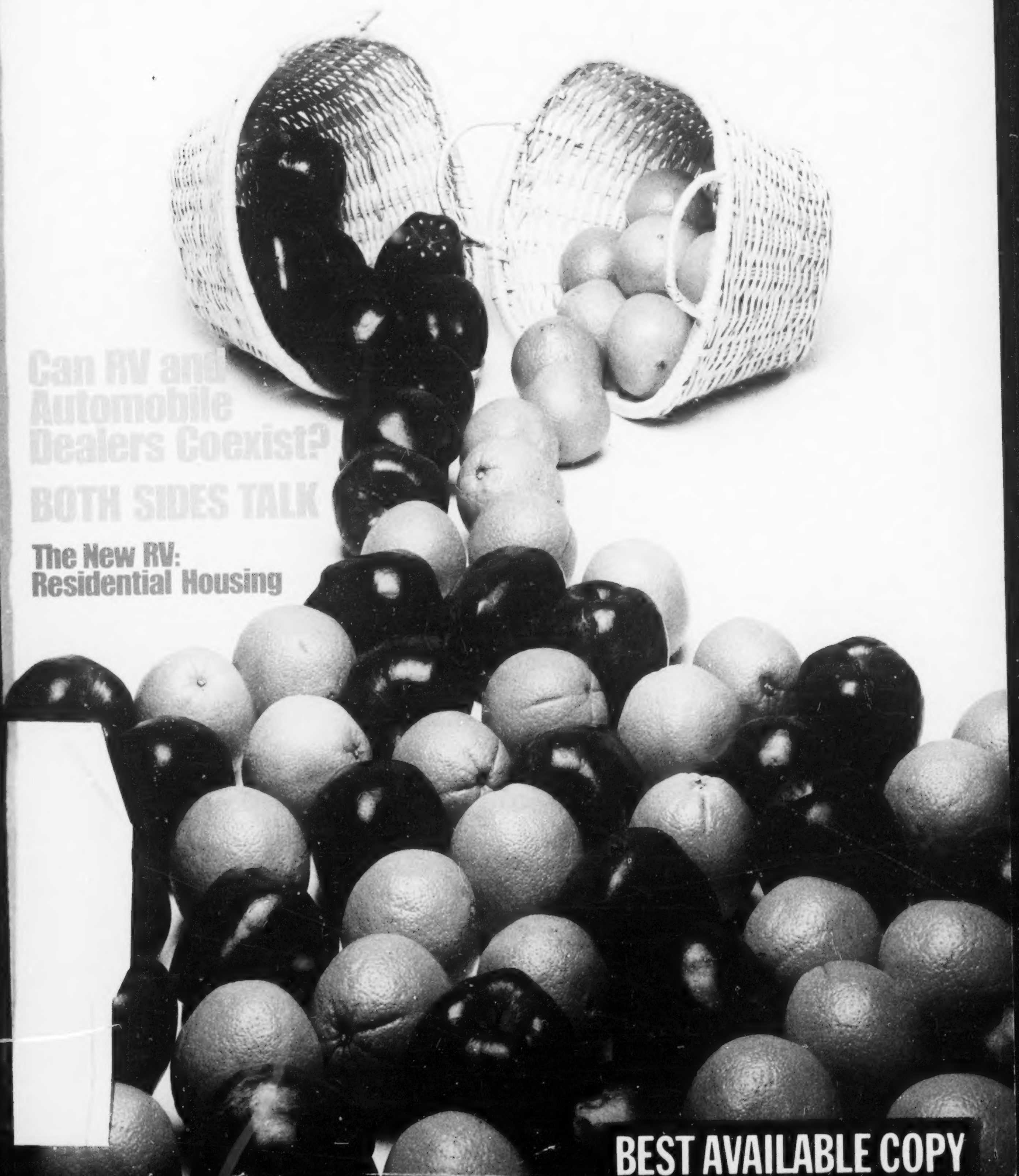

Can RV and Automobile Dealers Coexist?

BOTH SIDES TALK

The New RV: Residential Housing

RVBUS

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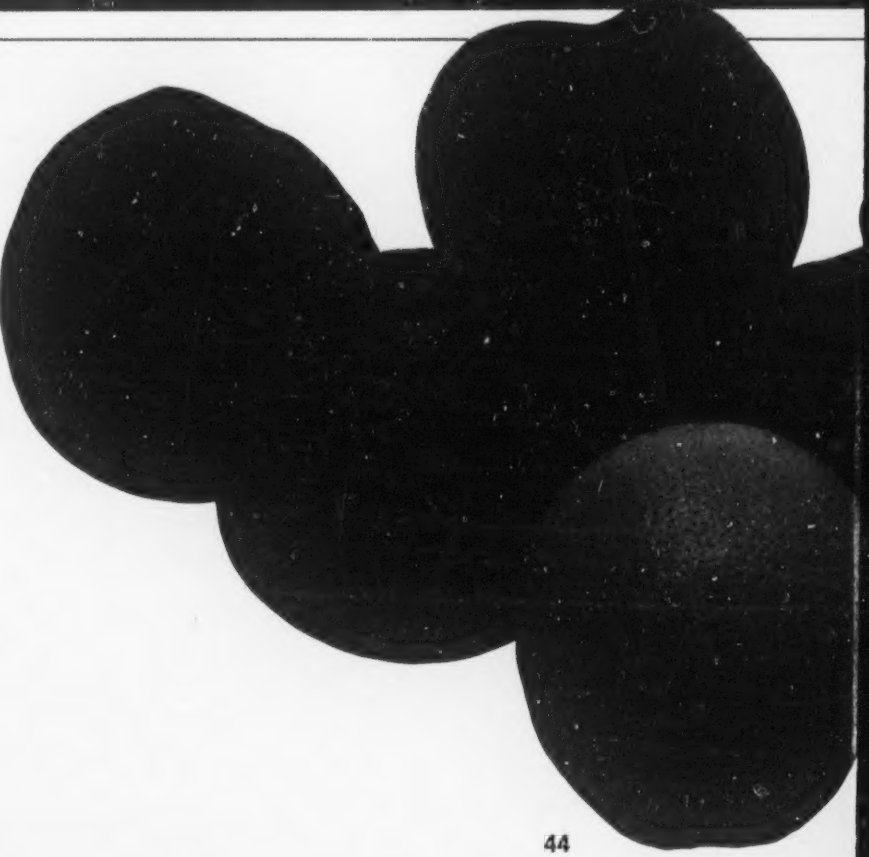

44

44 **Can RV/Auto Dealers Coexist?** *by Gaylord Maxwell, Susan O'Hara*
Both RV and auto dealers speak out on this explosive subject.

48 **RVs As Housing** *by Don Wright*
What does this new phenomenon mean to dealers?

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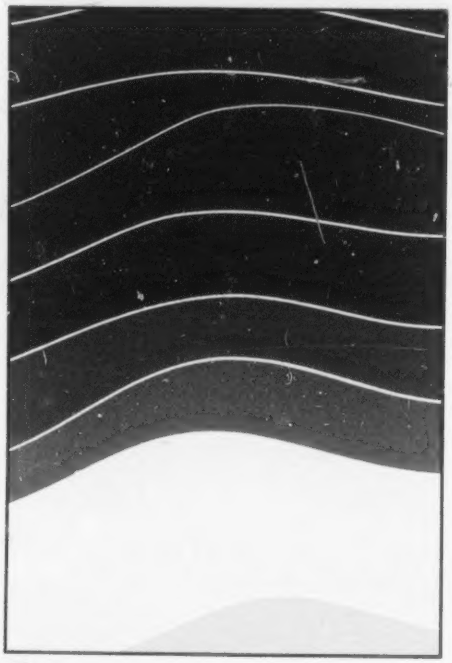
JUNE 1983/VOL. 34, NO. 3



52

52 **Product Duo: The Centra, and the Optimus-Alde**
The hot and cold of it from Duo-Therm and Dometic

56 **Reaction**
Readers give their opinions on The Chronic Complainer.

58 **Changes** *by Don Wright*
How recent changes in social values affect the RV industry.

Departments and Columns

6 EDITORIAL
8 LETTERS
14 GIRARD
19 MAXWELL
20 WRIGHT
24 GUESTVIEW
26 OERTLE
30 STRAWN
40 RV PEOPLE
96 CALENDAR
106 AD OF THE MONTH
111 PRODUCT SPOTLIGHT
114 AD INDEX
114 RETALES

33 FACTS AND FIGURES
Barometer, Perspective, Associations, Shipments
99 INDUSTRY NEWS
Newsbreaks, Industry Input, Shows

RVIA

RECREATION VEHICLE DEALERS ASSOCIATION OF NORTH AMERICA

WAREHOUSE DISTRIBUTORS ASSOCIATION FOR LEISURE AND MOBILE PRODUCTS INC

BPA

NCOA NATIONAL CAMPGROUND OWNERS ASSOCIATION

ON THE COVER: As our cover photo demonstrates, you can't compare apples and oranges any more than you can compare RV and automobile dealers. They are two different items. But can they share the commonality of RV sales and service in peaceful coexistence? Read what both sides have to say beginning on page 44. Photo: Ed Ikuta.

PERSPECTIVE

GAYLORD MAXWELL

March retail sales figures for RVB's Dealer Advisory Board (DAB) support those of January and February: An RV sales boom is on! With a March sales increase of 51% over last year and a first quarter increase of 36%, there can be little doubt that the public is again plunking down its dollars for recreation on wheels.

Not only is the buyer back in the marketplace, he's there with more dollars to spend. Big-ticket RVs are in great demand—particularly motorhomes. Barring an unforeseen catastrophe, it will be a banner year—by far the best since 1978. For a well-deserved change, the RV dealer is in the right place at the right time.

In terms of percentages, new units are doing much better than used. The problem is not the demand for used; it's the supply. Motorhome dealers are crying for used merchandise. Buyers are scouring the country trying to fill the demand. Used prices are almost ridiculously high.

SALES VOLUME		
For Month	This year $ 8,467,850	+51%
	Last year $ 5,624,007	
Year to Date	This year $17,786,825	+36%
	Last year $13,032,564	

TOTAL UNIT SALES		
For Month	This year 672	+14%
	Last year 589	
Year to Date	This year 1405	+14%
	Last year 1236	

NEW UNIT SALES		
For Month	This year 431	+19%
	Last year 363	
Year to Date	This year 896	+25%
	Last year 714	

USED UNIT SALES		
For Month	This year 241	+ 7%
	Last year 226	
Year to Date	This year 509	− 2%
	Last year 521	

Motorhomes

NEW	For Month	This year 103	+77%
		Last year 58	
	Year to Date	This year 266	+97%
		Last year 135	
USED	For Month	This year 87	+30%
		Last year 67	
	Year to Date	This year 167	−12%
		Last year 190	

The motorhome sales chart is going off the board. Sales are almost double those of the first quarter last year for the DAB. Large motorhome dealers with good inventories are going bananas. Their problem in the months to come will be in having units available. Manufacturers are working at full speed, but shortages are very likely.

The only negative aspect in motorhome sales is some dealers are complaining that their competitors are forcing grosses down. That's always been a problem. Part of it is due to the natural desire of some dealers to kill a fat hog on every deal; as more dealers and more brands appear in the marketplace, that gets less possible.

Travel Trailers

NEW	For Month	This year 100	− 9%
		Last year 109	
	Year to Date	This year 216	− 4%
		Last year 224	
USED	For Month	This year 85	−13%
		Last year 98	
	Year to Date	This year 202	+ 3%
		Last year 197	

This is the only category with minuses. In the generally booming situation, that's bad. But it's not as bad as it might appear. Down nine units from the preceding March isn't tragic; down only eight units for the first quarter doesn't spell doom. Quite likely there will be a turnaround very soon. Families start thinking vacations, and that's when they'll start looking and buying.

Although used units fell for the month, sales are still up for the year-to-date. Some dealers are reporting larger used inventories than they like and a consequent weakening of prices.

Truck Campers

NEW	For Month	This year 19	+19%
		Last year 16	
	Year to Date	This year 37	+37%
		Last year 27	
USED	For Month	This year 21	+38%
		Last year 15	
	Year to Date	This year 42	+14%
		Last year 37	

There's no boom with this type, but it's definitely on the upswing. Regardless of the relatively low unit figures, an increase of 37% is impressive.

Camping Trailers

NEW	For Month	This year 181	+17%
		Last year 155	
	Year to Date	This year 308	+10%
		Last year 281	
USED	For Month	This year 39	+ 5%
		Last year 37	
	Year to Date	This year 64	−20%
		Last year 80	

After a somewhat sluggish 1982, it appears that the fold-downs are headed for a good year. Sales aren't booming, but the 17% improvement over last March is impressive. The 10% increase for the first quarter isn't bad.

Undoubtedly, as blue-collar workers get back to work again, sales in this category will pick up. They're family camping rigs, particularly popular with people of modest means. Good financing is important for good sales.

Fifth-wheels

NEW	For Month	This year 28	+ 12%
		Last year 25	
	Year to Date	This year 69	+ 47%
		Last year 47	
USED	For Month	This year 9	No change
		Last year 9	
	Year to Date	This year 34	+100%
		Last year 17	

After an excellent record in '82, the fivers appear to be headed for another good year. With sales up 47% for the first quarter, it's safe to assume that the upward trend will be with us for the foreseeable future.

SHIPMENTS

AFTERMARKET

In addition to our regularly reported aftermarket items, our Advisory Board members reported sales on these additional most frequently sold items in March '83: connectors (3766), sewer hoses (2886), hitch balls (2500), fittings (1500), pumps (1000), lights (900), hitches (577), Monetary starter switches (250), H.D. signal flashers (242), pods (234), steps (78), fans (71). Aftermarket distributors who would like to participate in our *Aftermarket* report are invited to contact the editors at RVB, 29901 Agoura Road, Agoura Hills, California 91301.

CATEGORY	**NO. UNITS SOLD**
AM/FM Stereo Tape	0
Antenna	1728
Auxiliary Battery	214
Awning	1990
Battery Isolator	1463
Fluorescent Lights	1000
Generator	10
Portable Barbecue	47
Portable Toilets	811
Roof Air-Conditioner	853
Smoke Detector	41
Tire Carrier	1261
Tire Pressure Gauge	215
Toilet Chemicals	27,821
Trailer Jacks	1780
TV (Black & White)	0
TV (Color)	0
Vacuum Cleaner	2

RVIA MARCH

The marketing committee of the Recreation Vehicle Industry Association has announced that the total number of recreational vehicles shipped from manufacturers' plants during March 1983 was 33,500, up 37.9% from March of 1982.

The shipment figures released by the association are contained in a report compiled for the membership by RVIA's marketing committee under the chairmanship of Allen Yoder Jr. of Jayco, Incorporated, Middlebury, Indiana.

RV shipments were as follows in March 1983		March 1982	Percent Change	Cumulative 1983	Cumulative 1982	Percent Change
TRAVEL TRAILERS	6900	5800	+ 19.0%	16,600	13,400	+ 23.9%
FIFTH-WHEELS	1500	1000	+ 50.0%	3500	2700	+ 29.6%
TRUCK CAMPERS	800	400	+ 100.0%	1500	1000	+ 50.0%
MULTI-USE VEHICLES	14,000	9000	+ 55.6%	36,500	20,200	+ 80.7%
TYPE A MOTOR-HOMES	2700	1700	+ 58.8%	6900	4300	+ 60.5%
TYPE B VAN CAMPERS	800	400	+ 100.0%	1600	900	+ 77.8%
TYPE C MINI MOTOR-HOMES	2700	1700	+ 58.8%	6100	4200	+ 45.2%
FOLDING CAMPING TRAILERS	4100	4300	− 4.7%	9600	9300	+ 3.2%
TOTALS	33,500	24,300	+ 37.9%	82,300	56,000	+ 47.0%

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RV BUSINESS

FROM THE EDITORS OF TL ENTE

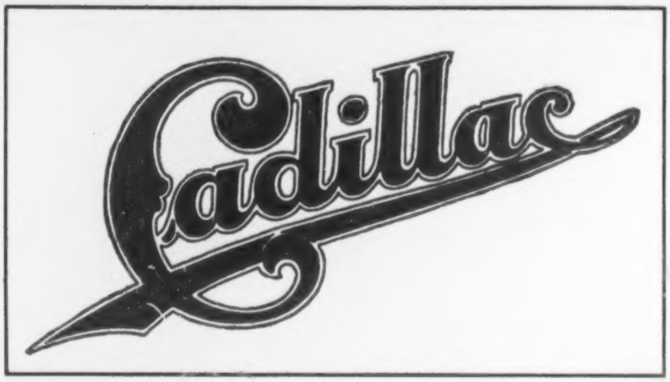
HOW IMPORTS WILL AFFECT THE RV MARKET

CESSORY ING SHELVED?

THE 'CORVETTE CAMPER' HAS ARRIVED!

INESS

JULY 1983/VOL. 34, NO. 4



40 LOVE ME

32 **Import RVs** *by Dick Bastle*
Invasion? Revolution? Who is doing what and why?

36 **Scandinavian Trailer** *by Alf Agdler*
What can U.S. manufacturers learn from European counterparts?

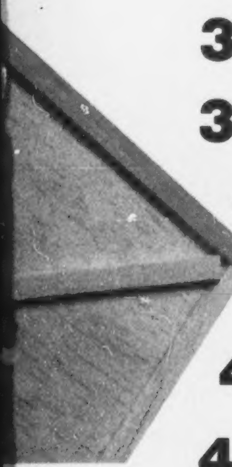
38 **The Cold War** *by Don Wright*
The air of competition is sharp in the RV refrigerator market.

40 **Love Me, Love My Logo** *by Ben Sussman*
A logo is more than name registration; it's corporate image.

42 **Dealer's Stepchild** *by Don Wright*
Will the RV store be shelved in the good times?

43 **Rental Franchise** *by Martha McCarty*
This controversial venture is working—nationwide!

44 **The Master Carrier** *by Bill Partridge*
Crazy or ingenious—it still works.



Departments and Columns

7 EDITORIAL
8 LETTERS
10 WRIGHT
12 GUESTVIEW
16 STRAWN
28 RV PEOPLE
30 MAXWELL
84 CALENDAR
97 SOUTH BEND SHOW
128 PROFITMAKERS
130 OERTLE
134 GIRARD
138 AD INDEX
140 CLASSIFIEDS
142 RETALES

21 FACTS AND FIGURES
Barometer, Perspective, Associations, Shipments
73 INDUSTRY NEWS

RVIA

RECREATION VEHICLE DEALERS ASSOCIATION OF NORTH AMERICA
R V D A

WAREHOUSE DISTRIBUTORS ASSOCIATION FOR LEISURE AND MOBILE PRODUCTS, INC

BPA

MEMBER NATIONAL CAMPGROUND OWNERS ASSOCIATION
NCOA

ON THE COVER: Foreign manufacturers are jockeying for position in the international RV marketplace—and hungrily eyeing the U.S. market. Where do U.S. manufacturers fit into the picture? See our incisive report beginning on page 32. Photo by Imagics.

PERSPECTIVE

GAYLORD MAXWELL

SALES VOLUME

For Month	This year $ 8,983,810	+72%
	Last year $ 5,215,441	
Year to Date	This year $26,770,658	+48%
	Last year $18,052,095	

TOTAL UNIT SALES

For Month	This year 729	+21%
	Last year 602	
Year to Date	This year 2142	+20%
	Last year 1781	

NEW UNIT SALES

For Month	This year 475	+33%
	Last year 357	
Year to Date	This year 1373	+31%
	Last year 1052	

USED UNIT SALES

For Month	This year 254	+ 4%
	Last year 245	
Year to Date	This year 769	+ 5%
	Last year 729	

Dealer Advisory Board figures for April show that what has been a good year so far is getting even better. Both dollar volume and unit sales are up enormously from last year. The big jump in dollars taken in reflects the almost incredible increase in motorhome sales—big-ticket items. Although the jump in units is more modest, there's nothing bad about a 20% increase over the previous year.

New unit sales have increased much more than used—a fact due to a lack of supply rather than lack of interest. Used motorhomes are particularly in great demand and are selling for astronomical prices. Used trailers and fifth-wheels are doing well, too. Only campers and folding trailers are not faring well in the used department.

Medium-size and larger dealers, especially those with strong motorhome departments, are getting a larger share of the increase in business than are small dealers. Several department store dealers who had cut back on motorhomes during the latest crunch are now running full tilt in them again.

Several members of the DAB report that they're finding lenders very receptive to RV paper, a definite switch from just a couple of years ago in some areas. The good dealer can usually pick and choose among several lenders.

Motorhomes

NEW	For Month	This year 126	+137%
		Last year 53	
	Year to Date	This year 373	+106%
		Last year 181	
USED	For Month	This year 82	+ 14%
		Last year 72	
	Year to Date	This year 261	+ 6%
		Last year 246	

It's a great year to be in the motorhome business. Just a few years back, many conservative businessmen (especially bankers) wouldn't have believed today's scenario would be possible. Many had categorized motorhomes with dinosaurs. Today's sales prove just how wrong they were. Class A's are still the big sellers but C's are picking up. Dealers report that the family buyers are showing up again.

Travel Trailers

NEW	For Month	This year 130	+19%
		Last year 109	
	Year to Date	This year 346	+ 4%
		Last year 332	
USED	For Month	This year 112	+35%
		Last year 83	
	Year to Date	This year 314	+18%
		Last year 267	

Although sales aren't setting the world on fire, travel trailers picked up in April. In used units the supply isn't as short as it is in motorhomes, but most trailer specialists are doing a brisk and profitable business in pre-owned.

Truck Campers

NEW	For Month	This year 20	+33%
		Last year 15	
	Year to Date	This year 57	+36%
		Last year 42	
USED	For Month	This year 10	−60%
		Last year 25	
	Year to Date	This year 49	−22%
		Last year 63	

New unit sales in this category are excellent in terms of percentages. For about a year now, some dealers have been finding the demand for this RV type increasing in their marketplace. Some have been taking advantage of the situation by restocking. It's not a boom, but the camper picture is definitely looking better. Used camper sales are very good compared to last year. Part of the problem is that many dealers won't take campers in trade, or they won't give reasonable prices for them, so they're being sold privately.

Camping Trailers

NEW	For Month	This year 172	+10%
		Last year 157	
	Year to Date	This year 500	+14%
		Last year 439	
USED	For Month	This year 40	−26%
		Last year 54	
	Year to Date	This year 103	−25%
		Last year 137	

The fold-downs have been having some trouble for the past year, but things are looking up. The 14% increase over the first four months of last year is impressive. Strangely, some of the DAB camping trailer dealers who ordinarily do very well are down, whereas some who don't normally sell many are up dramatically. Used units aren't doing nearly as well as they did last year. There's no explanation.

Fifth-wheels

NEW	For Month	This year [illegible]	+ 17%
		Last year 23	
	Year to Date	This year 97	+ 67%
		Last year 58	
USED	For Month	This year 10	− 9%
		Last year 11	
	Year to Date	This year 42	+40%
		Last year 30	

April's 17% increase over the comparable month last year is the lowest monthly increase in a long time. However, the 67% increase for the year-to-date proves that this RV type is increasing in popularity. Used sales fell off by one unit for the month, but they're still very good for the year-to-date.

SHIPMENTS

AFTERMARKET

CATEGORY	NO. UNITS SOLD
AM/FM Stereo Tape	0
Antenna	1940
Auxiliary Battery	549
Awning	2063
Battery Isolator	1596
Fluorescent Lights	1459
Generator	22
Portable Barbecue	98
Portable Toilets	913
Roof Air-Conditioner	1047
Smoke Detector	12
Tire Carrier	1241
Tire Pressure Gauge	415
Toilet Chemicals	16,730
Trailer Jacks	1839
TV (Black & White)	0
TV (Color)	0
Vacuum Cleaner	0

In addition to our regularly reported aftermarket items, our Advisory Board members reported sales on these additional most frequently sold items in April '83: hitch balls (1519), sewer hoses (1490), cord adaptors (1200), hitches (548), storage pods (375), battery boxes (229), fans (152), steps (25). Aftermarket distributors who would like to participate in our *Aftermarket* report are invited to contact the editors at RVB, 29901 Agoura Road, Agoura Hills, California 91301.

RVIA APRIL

The marketing committee of the Recreation Vehicle Industry Association has announced that the total number of recreational vehicles shipped from manufacturers' plants during April 1983 was 36,000, up 34.8% from April of 1982.

The shipment figures released by the association are contained in a report compiled for the membership by RVIA's marketing committee under the chairmanship of Allen Yoder Jr. of Jayco, Incorporated, Middlebury, Indiana.

RV shipments were as follows in April 1983		April 1982	Percent Change	Cumulative 1983	Cumulative 1982	Percent Change
TRAVEL TRAILERS	8800	6600	+33.3%	25,400	20,000	+27.0%
FIFTH-WHEELS	1800	1300	+38.5%	5300	4000	+32.5%
TRUCK CAMPERS	800	800	+ 0%	2300	1800	+27.8%
MULTI-USE VEHICLES	14,200	9600	+48.0%	50,700	29,800	+70.1%
TYPE A: MOTOR-HOMES	3000	2000	+50.0%	9900	6300	+57.1%
TYPE B: VAN CAMPERS	500	600	−16.7%	2100	1500	+40.0%
TYPE C: MINI MOTOR-HOMES	3000	1700	+76.5%	9100	5900	+54.2%
FOLDING CAMPING TRAILERS	3900	4100	− 4.9%	13,500	13,400	+ 0.8%
TOTALS	36,000	26,700	+34.8%	118,300	82,700	+43.0%

RV BUSINESS

ROM THE EDITORS OF TL ENTERPRISES

AUGUST 1983 $2.00

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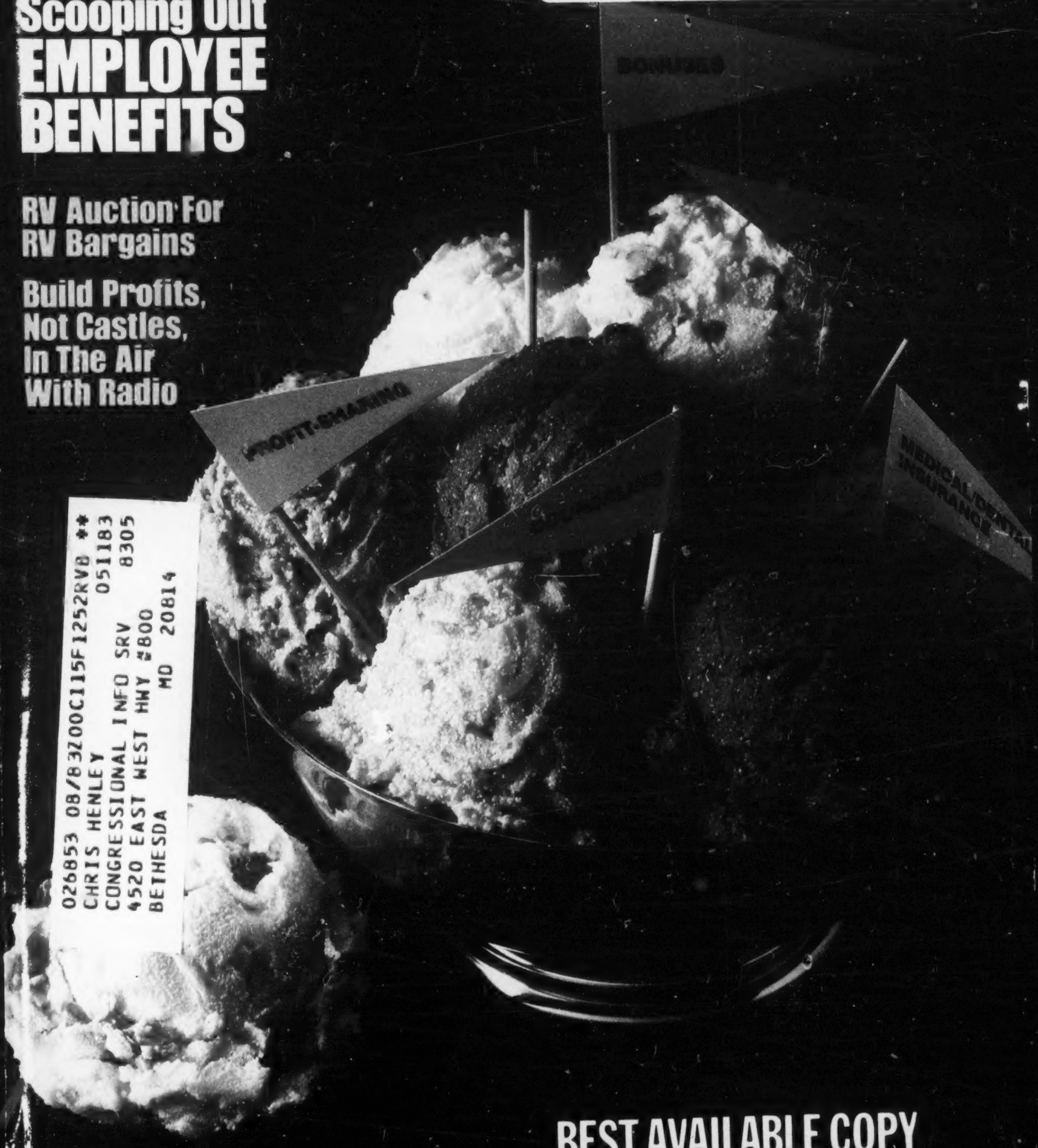
Scooping Out EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

RV Auction For RV Bargains

Build Profits, Not Castles, In The Air With Radio


BONUSES
PROFIT-SHARING
MEDICAL/DENTAL INSURANCE

026853 08/83Z00C115F1252RVB **
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CONGRESSIONAL INFO SRV 8305
4520 EAST WEST HWY #800
BETHESDA MD 20814

RV BUSINESS

A TL ENTERPRISES PUBLICATION
AUGUST 1983/VOL. 34, NO. 5

CONTENTS

6
EDITORIAL
by Michael Schneider

8
LETTERS

11
WRIGHT
How does LaSalle-Deitch do it?

14
MAXWELL
Is the dealer/manufacturer honeymoon over?

18
OERTLE
The high cost of an inexpensive vacation.

23
BAROMETER
by John Thompson
Predictions, incentives, and opinion.

24
PERSPECTIVE
by Gaylord Maxwell
Motorhome sales are redhot!

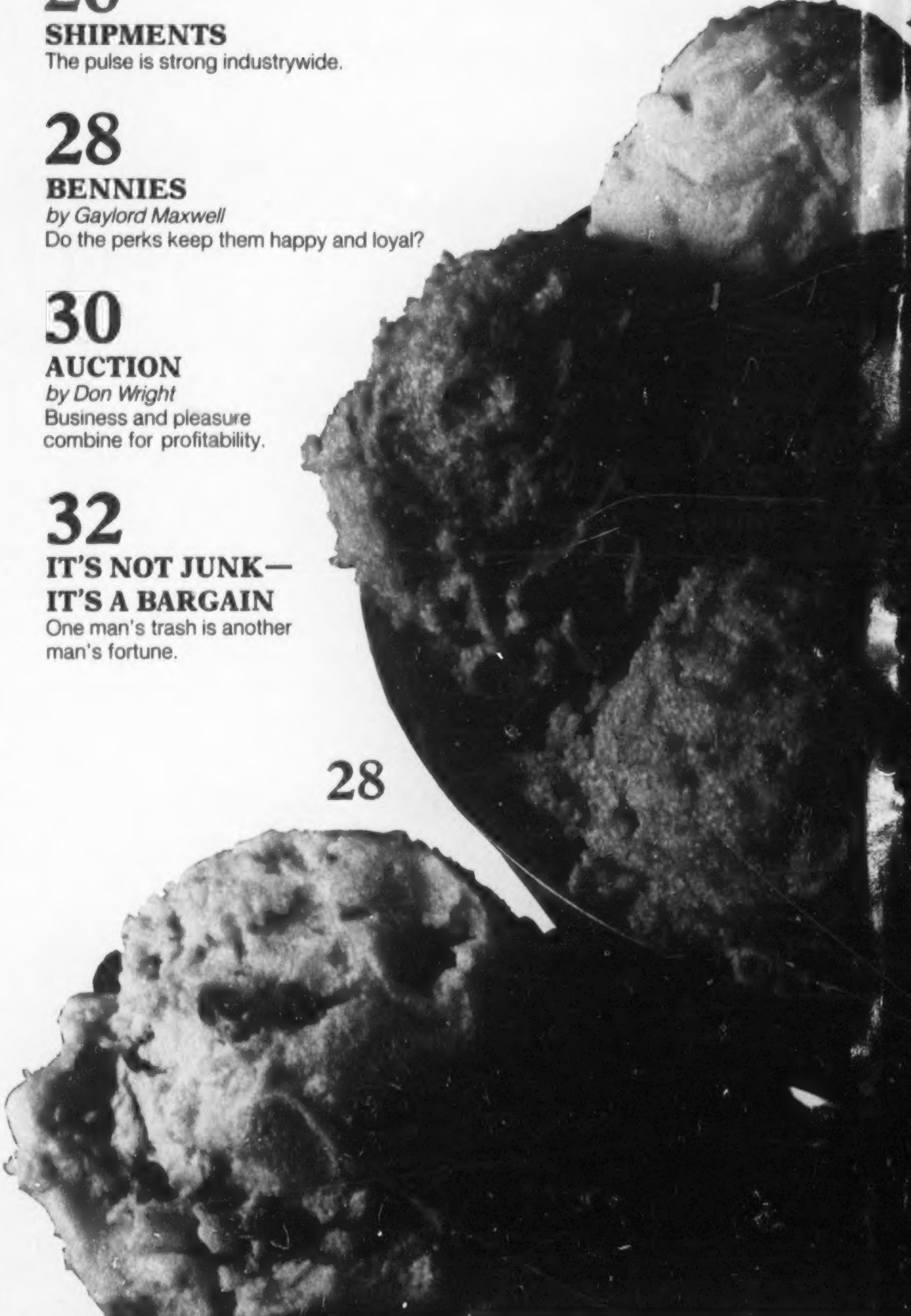
25
ASSOCIATIONS
by Olga Markowitz
Auto Internacional Association campaigns against HR1234.

26
SHIPMENTS
The pulse is strong industrywide.

28
BENNIES
by Gaylord Maxwell
Do the perks keep them happy and loyal?

30
AUCTION
by Don Wright
Business and pleasure combine for profitability.

32
IT'S NOT JUNK—IT'S A BARGAIN
One man's trash is another man's fortune.



28

33
CAPTIVE INSURANCE
by Don Wright
RV industry starts its own program.

34
YOU'RE ON THE AIR
by Ben Sussman
Building profits with radio advertising.

46
RV PEOPLE

65
NEWS
Olga Markowitz, Coordinator
Dun & Bradstreet keeping tabs on dealers.

78
GUESTVIEW
by Norma O'Disio
Service with a $mile.

84
AD OF THE MONTH
by Ben Sussman
Coachmen sees the big picture.

87
PRODUCT SPOTLIGHT
by Don Wright
The other half of the fiver.

92
PROFITMAKERS

100
CALENDAR

102
GIRARD
(Don't) Promise them anything.

106
RETALES
by Bob Stevens

ON THE COVER: As they say, good help is hard to find—and harder to keep. Today's employers are finding that dishing out a mouth watering helping of benefits goes a long way to solving that problem. Help yourself to the facts on page 28. Photo: Jordan Miller.

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PERSPECTIVE

An analysis of RVB's monthly survey
of its Dealer Advisory Board Members

GAYLORD MAXWELL

Retail RV sales in May '83 for RVB's Dealer Advisory Board (DAB) were up 48% in dollar volume above the previous May. That is a continuation of a trend that has been evident for several months and is only slightly off the 53% increase for the year-to-date.

Unit sales increases aren't as dramatic. With new units running about 25% above last year—and used unit sales only slightly above those of '83—it is evident that larger, more expensive units are being purchased. Motorhomes are the real "fair-haired boy" at this time. Used sales would be stronger if there were more motorhomes available. Dealers are digging everywhere for them, but there still aren't enough. Prices are holding very high.

Most merchandise is still in somewhat short supply. Dealers often wait from six to eight weeks for deliveries. However, there are reports that some companies are catching up. Also, the fact that dealers slow down in buying excess inventory in the early summer is having some effect on product availability.

SALES VOLUME		
For Month	This year $ 9,097,082	+48%
	Last year $ 6,131,012	
Year to Date	This year $35,872,218	+53%
	Last year $23,382,295	

TOTAL UNIT SALES		
For Month	This year 772	+18%
	Last year 655	
Year to Date	This year 2905	+15%
	Last year 2519	

NEW UNIT SALES		
For Month	This year 512	+23%
	Last year 416	
Year to Date	This year 1878	+25%
	Last year 1502	

USED UNIT SALES		
For Month	This year 260	+9%
	Last year 239	
Year to Date	This year 1027	+1%
	Last year 1017	

TRAVEL TRAILERS

NEW	For Month	This year 150	+40%
		Last year 107	
	Year to Date	This year 489	+ 6%
		Last year 463	
USED	For Month	This year 109	+20%
		Last year 91	
	Year to Date	This year 422	+ 3%
		Last year 411	

It's been the best month for travel trailers in recent history. The 40% increase for the month represents a peak that hasn't been seen since before the recent crunch. Undoubtedly, the upturn in business is making a difference. Families are again getting more involved in RVing because they're more sure of their jobs.

TRUCK CAMPERS

NEW	For Month	This year 16	- 30%
		Last year 23	
	Year to Date	This year 73	+16%
		Last year 63	
USED	For Month	This year 23	+10%
		Last year 21	
	Year to Date	This year 73	- 9%
		Last year 80	

The 30% drop in sales from last May is not as drastic as it appears. It represents seven fewer sales than in the preceding May. A more important figure is the 16% increase above the previous year-to-date.

It's not a boom situation, but campers are doing well in today's market. The few dealers who sell them report excellent camper profits.

MOTORHOMES

NEW	For Month	This year 121	+57%
		Last year 77	
	Year to Date	This year 494	+87%
		Last year 264	
USED	For Month	This year 87	+26%
		Last year 69	
	Year to Date	This year 344	+ 7%
		Last year 322	

They're hot! Class A's particularly, although summer vacation has helped minis pick up. As the economy improves, so will mini sales. Also, more reasonable interest rates now make motorhomes more attractive. It would be interesting to see what would happen if a motorhome manufacturer made 8.8% financing available on his units!

Of the 14 DAB members who stock motorhomes, 12 reported profits excellent or good.

CAMPING TRAILERS

NEW	For Month	This year 191	+ 4%
		Last year 184	
	Year to Date	This year 693	+12%
		Last year 618	
USED	For Month	This year 34	- 29%
		Last year 48	
	Year to Date	This year 138	- 18%
		Last year 169	

After considerable hesitation this year (and last), fold-downs are selling better. The 12% increase for the year-to-date is meaningful.

Used sales figures don't look so good. Dealers say most used rigs are being sold directly by their owners. Their relatively low price makes direct cash sales possible.

FIFTH-WHEELS

NEW	For Month	This year 34	+36%
		Last year 25	
	Year to Date	This year 129	+37%
		Last year 94	
USED	For Month	This year 7	- 30%
		Last year 10	
	Year to Date	This year 50	+43%
		Last year 35	

New unit sales are running at a nice pace compared to last year—and last year was strong. The 37% year-to-date increase is particularly impressive when one considers that most units are large and high priced. Although profits are ranked from excellent to poor, the fiver specialists find the former to be the case. ●

SHIPMENTS

AFTERMARKET

CATEGORY	NO. UNITS SOLD
AM/FM Stereo Tape	0
Antenna	2139
Auxiliary Battery	229
Awning	1906
Battery Isolator	1503
Fluorescent Lights	1494
Generator	13
Portable Barbecue	204
Portable Toilets	714
Roof Air-Conditioner	1486
Smoke Detector	28
Tire Carrier	1066
Tire Pressure Gauge	23
Toilet Chemicals	23,283
Trailer Jacks	2039
TV (Black & White)	0
TV (Color)	0
Vacuum Cleaner	4

In addition to our regularly reported aftermarket items, our Advisory Board members reported sales on these additional most frequently sold items in May '83: hitches (2735), sewer hoses (2036), hitch balls (2024), assorted sewer fittings (2000), hand pumps (1000), roof vents (500), turn signal flashers (339), storage pods (301), regulators (200), fans (162), steps (67). Aftermarket distributors who would like to participate in our *Aftermarket* report are invited to contact the editors at RVB, 29901 Agoura Road, Agoura Hills, California 91301.

RVIA MAY

The marketing committee of the Recreation Vehicle Industry Association has announced that the total number of recreational vehicles shipped from manufacturers' plants during May 1983 was 35,100, up 51.3% from May of 1982.

The shipment figures released by the association are contained in a report compiled for the membership by RVIA's marketing committee under the chairmanship of Allen Yoder Jr. of Jayco, Incorporated, Middlebury, Indiana.

RV shipments were as follows in May 1983		May 1983	Percent Change	Cumulative 1983	Cumulative 1982	Percent Change
TRAVEL TRAILERS	7300	4900	+49.0%	32,700	24,900	+31.3%
FIFTH-WHEELS	1700	1000	+70.0%	7000	5000	+40.0%
TRUCK CAMPERS	700	700	-0-	3000	2500	+20.0%
MULTI-USE VEHICLES	14,700	9800	+50.0%	65,400	39,600	+65.2%
TYPE A: MOTOR-HOMES	2800	1800	+55.6%	12,700	8100	+56.8%
TYPE B: VAN CAMPERS	400	400	-0-	2500	1900	31.6%
TYPE C: MINI MOTOR-HOMES	3100	2000	+55.0%	12,200	7900	+54.4%
FOLDING CAMPING TRAILERS	4400	2600	+69.2%	17,900	16,000	+11.9%
TOTALS	35,100	23,200	+51.3%	153,400	105,900	+44.9%

RV BUSINESS

FROM THE EDITORS OF TL ENTERPRISES

SEPTEMBER 1983 $2.00

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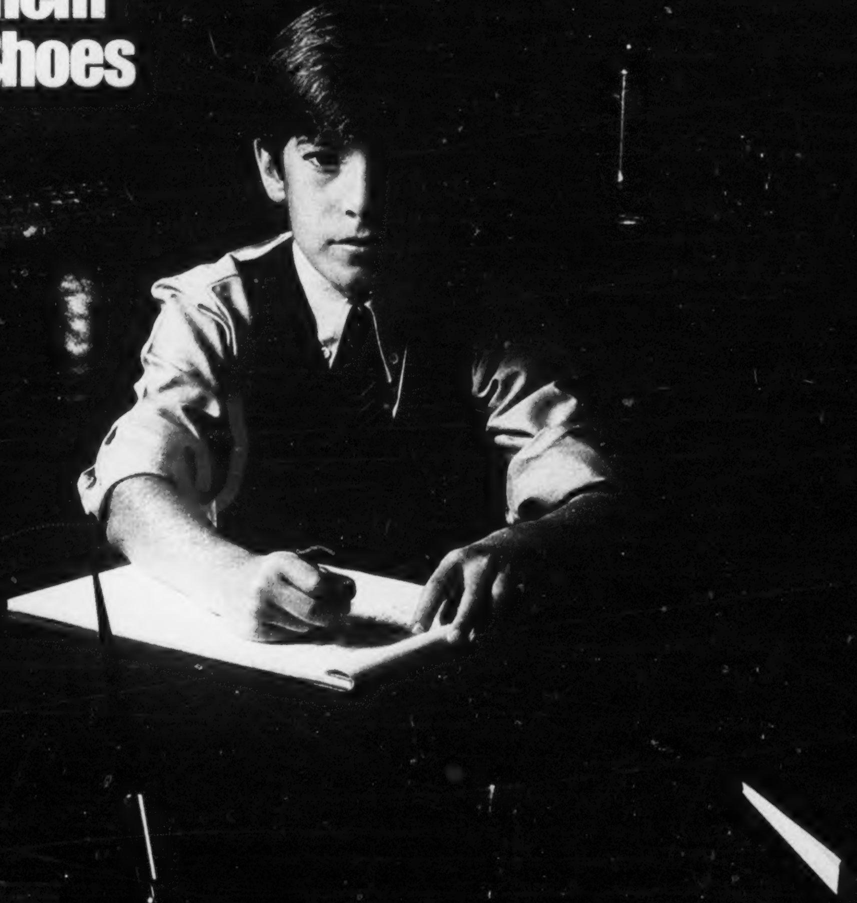
KIDS AND BUSINESS:
Grooming Them To Fill Your Shoes



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Getting Retail Financing

Targeting The Handicapped Market

RV BUSINESS

A TL ENTERPRISES PUBLICATION

SEPTEMBER 1983/VOL. 34, NO. 6

CONTENTS

7
EDITORIAL
by Michael Schneider

8
LETTERS

14
WRIGHT
Thou shalt not neglect thine insurance policy.

16
MAXWELL
A pinch of RVDA for spice.

19
BAROMETER
by John Thompson
Credit, loans and taxes.

20
PERSPECTIVE
by Gaylord Maxwell
June was bustin' out all over!

21
ASSOCIATIONS
by Olga Markowitz
RVIA says van conversions leading the industry.

22
SHIPMENTS
Fast and furious!

24
GUESTVIEW
Getting into the act.

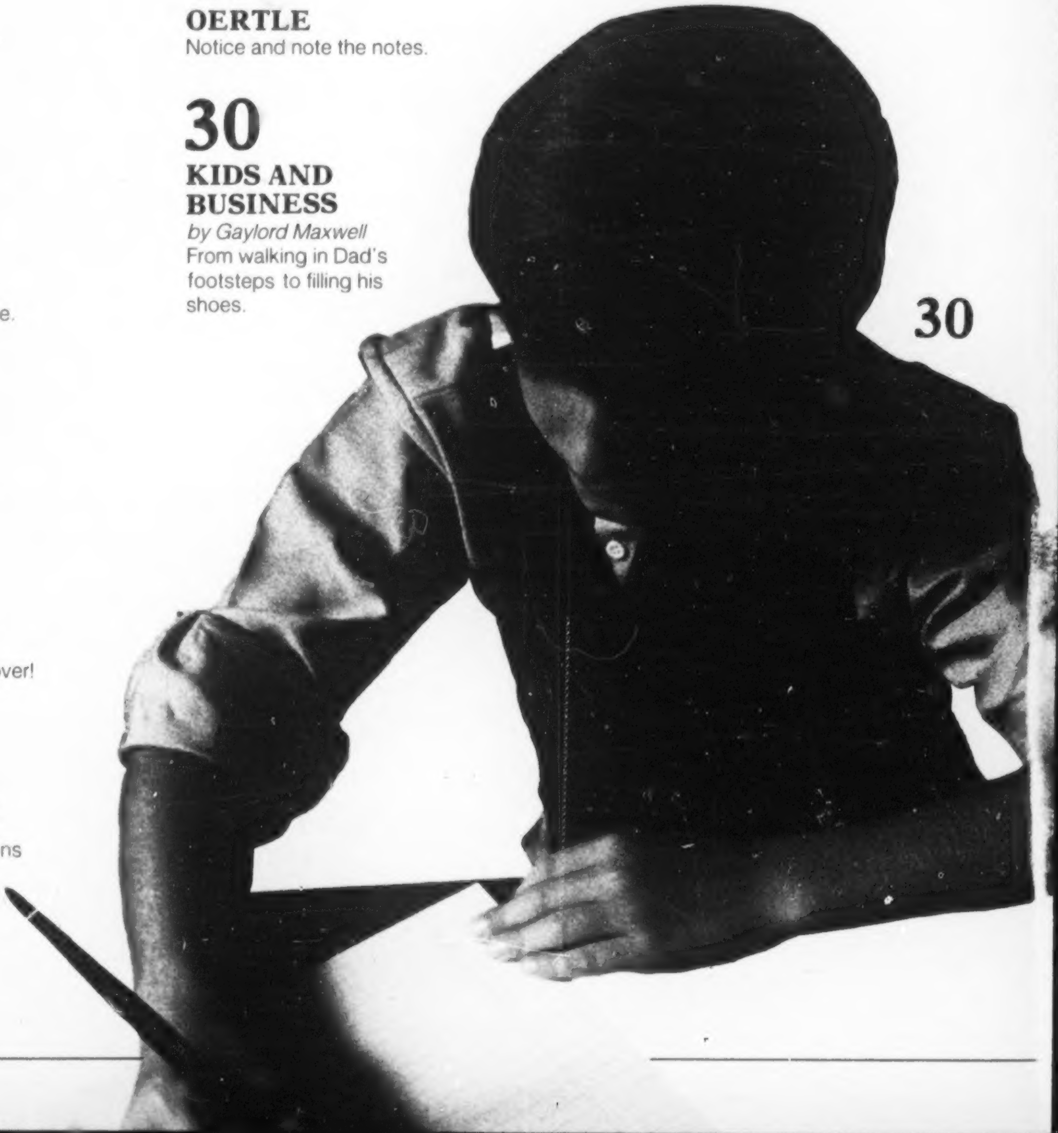
26
RV PEOPLE

28
OERTLE
Notice and note the notes.

30
KIDS AND BUSINESS
by Gaylord Maxwell
From walking in Dad's footsteps to filling his shoes.

34
RETAIL FINANCING
by John Thompson
Finding retail financing.

37
CELEBRATING!



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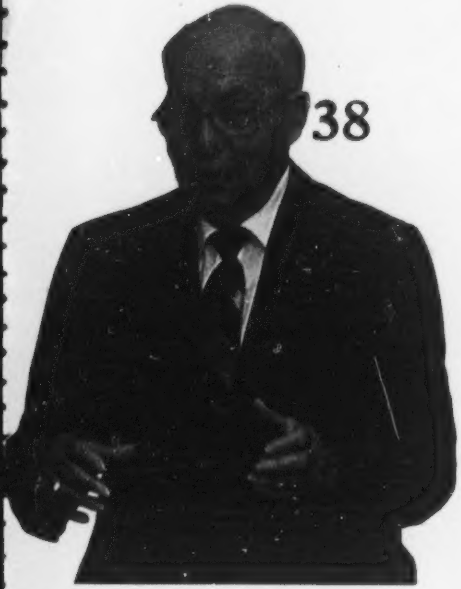

38

38
WINNEBAGO'S
by John Thompson
25th anniversary and tribute.

40
XPLORER'S
by Don Wright
Ray Frank's silver celebration.

42
HANDICAPPED MARKET
by Don Wright
Handy guide to who, what, when, why, where.

46
GIRARD
Objections overruled

58
PRODUCT SPOTLIGHT
by Don Wright
Ahoy, Coach Craft!

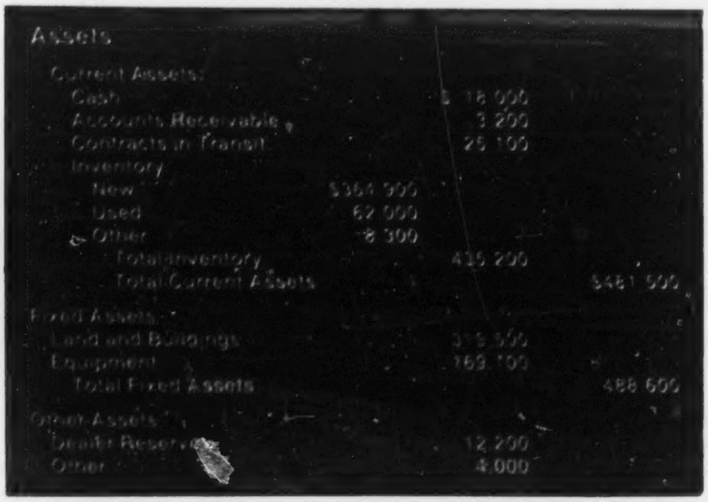
74
PROFITMAKERS

91
NEWS
Olga Markowitz, Coordinator

100
CALENDAR

102
RETALES
by Bob Stevens

34



Assets			
Current Assets:			
Cash		$ 18 000	
Accounts Receivable		3 200	
Contracts in Transit		25 100	
Inventory			
New	$364 900		
Used	62 000		
Other	8 300		
Total Inventory		435 200	
Total Current Assets			$481 500
Fixed Assets:			
Land and Buildings		319 500	
Equipment		169 100	
Total Fixed Assets			488 600
Other Assets:			
Dealer Reserve		12 200	
Other		4,000	

ON THE COVER: There are those who say that keeping it all in the family is downright downhome good business. This junior magnate may only be nine years old, but he typifies many an RV business where son or daughter eventually is given command. For some, the future is now. See what they have to say on page 34. Photo by Hal Hunt.

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PERSPECTIVE

An analysis of RVB's monthly survey of its Dealer Advisory Board Members

GAYLORD MAXWELL

June was a great month for RV sales. Every one of RVB's 22-member Dealer Advisory Board (DAB) was up, save for one lone soul. Several dealers reported extraordinary increases above the previous year—some double and one up 216%!

Sales of new units were up in all types. Camping trailers and truck campers showed a slight drop in used units. Dealers can't get enough used motorhomes to supply the demand.

Profits are reported good to excellent by most dealers. Only rarely does anyone indicate poor profits in any category.

SALES VOLUME		
For Month	This year $ 8,989,488	+43%
	Last year $ 6,288,753	
Year to Date	This year $44,283,752	+48%
	Last year $29,955,582	

TOTAL UNIT SALES		
For Month	This year 801	+35%
	Last year 595	
Year to Date	This year 3673	+24%
	Last year 2961	

NEW UNIT SALES		
For Month	This year 537	+46%
	Last year 369	
Year to Date	This year 2334	+32%
	Last year 1764	

USED UNIT SALES		
For Month	This year 264	+17%
	Last year 226	
Year to Date	This year 1339	+12%
	Last year 1197	

Motorhomes

NEW	For Month	This year 122	+69%
		Last year 72	
	Year to Date	This year 616	+84%
		Last year 334	
USED	For Month	This year 79	+ 5%
		Last year 75	
	Year to Date	This year 472	+19%
		Last year 395	

This is still the glamour type. Large dealers are doing particularly well; department stores with strong motorized departments aren't far behind.

Class C's have caught on again and seem to be catching up with A's.

A couple of DAB members rated profits fair, but all others rated them good or excellent.

Travel Trailers

NEW	For Month	This year 132	+39%
		Last year 95	
	Year to Date	This year 106	+20%
		Last year 89	
USED	For Month	This year 606	+14%
		Last year 532	
	Year to Date	This year 521	+15%
		Last year 453	

The 39% increase above that of last June is the best showing this category has made all year. Obviously, the vacation season has brought out family buyers. We're hearing reports of more blue-collar workers coming back.

Profits are generally rated good with a few fairs and a couple of excellents.

Truck Campers

NEW	For Month	This year 23	+15%
		Last year 20	
	Year to Date	This year 97	+23%
		Last year 79	
USED	For Month	This year 18	- 18%
		Last year 22	
	Year to Date	This year 101	- 1%
		Last year 102	

Although the sales increase isn't spectacular, the jump of 23% for the year-to-date above last year is significant.

Several DAB members have added modest inventories of campers this year. Unfortunately, as with any RV type, modest inventories almost invariably mean modest sales.

Profits were rated good to excellent for the month.

Camping Trailers

NEW	For Month	This year 218	+39%
		Last year 157	
	Year to Date	This year 843	+20%
		Last year 702	
USED	For Month	This year 46	+39%
		Last year 33	
	Year to Date	This year 180	- 12%
		Last year 205	

As with travel trailers, the 39% jump in sales for June indicates family buyers are active. Americans are somewhat spoiled by self-containment, but the price factor might cause many of them to consider roughing it a bit in less-expensive fold-downs.

Profits are generally rated good.

Fifth-Wheels

NEW	For Month	This year 42	+83%
		Last year 23	
	Year to Date	This year 172	+47%
		Last year 117	
USED	For Month	This year 15	+114%
		Last year 7	
	Year to Date	This year 65	+55%
		Last year 42	

In terms of percentages, this was the "bananas" type for the month. The new unit sales increase of 83% is very impressive even though the actual unit numbers aren't great. However, the consistent pattern of increase that has been apparent for a long time indicates that this RV type can be a real money-maker for the right dealers.

Profits were rated good to excellent. Δ

SHIPMENTS

AFTERMARKET

CATEGORY	NO. UNITS SOLD
AM/FM Stereo Tape	0
Antenna	1279
Auxiliary Battery	50
Awning	985
Battery Isolator	739
Fluorescent Lights	1443
Generator	7
Portable Barbecue	38
Portable Toilets	385
Roof Air-Conditioner	685
Smoke Detector	2
Tire Carrier	766
Tire Pressure Gauge	146
Toilet Chemicals	15,162
Trailer Jacks	1036
TV (Black & White)	0
TV (Color)	0
Vacuum Cleaner	4

In addition to our regularly reported aftermarket items, our Advisory Board members reported sales on these additional most frequently sold items in June '83: sewer hoses (2215), hitch balls (801), hitches (569), water lines (520), fans (256), storage pods (247), steps (75), water heaters (71). Aftermarket distributors who would like to participate in our *Aftermarket* report are invited to contact the editors at RVB, 29901 Agoura Road, Agoura Hills, California 91301.

RVIA, JUNE

The marketing committee of the Recreation Vehicle Industry Association has announced that the total number of recreational vehicles shipped from manufacturers' plants during June 1983 was 36,300, up 21.4% from June of 1982.

The shipment figures released by the association are contained in a report compiled for the membership by RVIA's marketing committee under the chairmanship of Allen Yoder Jr. of Jayco, Incorporated, Middlebury, Indiana.

RV shipments were as follows in June 1983		June 1982	Percent Change	Cumulative 1983	Cumulative 1982	Percent Change
TRAVEL TRAILERS	7700	5200	+48.1%	40,400	30,100	+34.2%
FIFTH-WHEELS	2000	1100	+81.8%	9000	6100	+47.5%
TRUCK CAMPERS	800	700	+14.3%	3800	3200	+18.8%
MULTI-USE VEHICLES	15,200	14,800	+2.7%	80,600	54,400	+48.2%
TYPE A: MOTOR-HOMES	3200	1700	+88.2%	15,900	4800	+62.2%
TYPE B: VAN CAMPERS	400	400	-0-	2900	2300	+26.1%
TYPE C: MINI MOTOR-HOMES	3200	1900	+68.4%	15,400	9800	+57.1%
FOLDING CAMPING TRAILERS	3800	4100	-7.9%	21,700	20,100	+8.0%
TOTALS	36,300	29,900	+21.4%	189,700	135,800	+39.7%

RV BUSINESS

FROM THE EDITORS OF TL ENTERPRISES

OCTOBER 1983 $2.00

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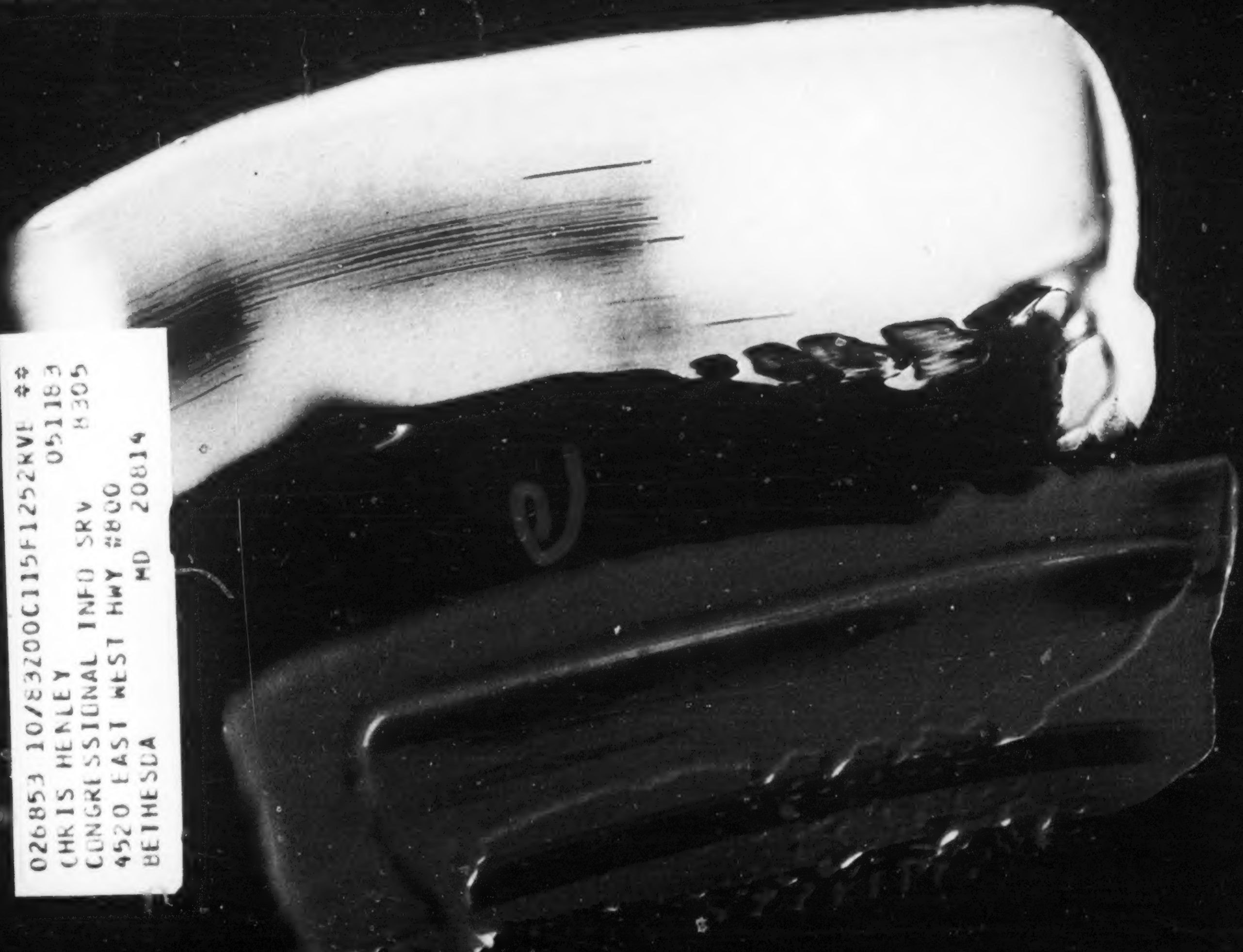
COLOR AND DESIGN: Their Impact On RV Interiors



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What Makes A Good Factory Rep?

Looking At The RV Labor Force

Special Dodger Show Section

RV BUSINESS

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CONTENTS

8
EDITORIAL
by Michael Schneider

12
LETTERS

20
MAXWELL
Little things mean a lot

22
GIRARD
Wrappings

24
OERTLE
Making use of the off-season

31
BAROMETER
by John Thompson
Shortages, zooms and newcomers

32
PERSPECTIVE
by Gaylord Maxwell
Boom times are here!

33
ASSOCIATIONS
by Olga Markowitz
New plan for more of tourism market

34
SHIPMENTS
Keeping on keeping on

36
WRIGHT
Aiming almost high

40
RV PEOPLE

44
COLOR AND DESIGN
by Susan O'Hara
Line, color, texture and profits

54
RV LABOR FORCE
by Bob Longsdorf
The differences are all the same

56
HEAVY HAND OF THE INS
How bad is it?

62
FACTORY REPS
by Gaylord Maxwell
How to tell the good guys from the bad

68
RETAIL FINANCING
by John Thompson
Part II: Financial Reports

76

76
CAMPING AND THE VICE PRESIDENT
by Bill Estes
Industry folks rough it with V.P. Bush

83
AD OF THE MONTH
by Ben Sussman
Onan—just dessert or just desert?

86
PROFITMAKERS

91
SPECIAL: DODGER SHOW SECTION
Schedule, floorplans, lists

99
NEWS
Olga Markowitz, Coordinator
Shipments up 40% for '83

115
AD INDEX

118
CALENDAR

122
RETALES
by Bob Stevens

ON THE COVER: A good technician can build a good box and take it on the road. But it takes a good interior designer to tailor the inside to appeal to the finer tastes of the market; and it takes a terrific designer to produce an RV prospective owners will call "home." See how it's done, beginning on page 44. Photo by Hal Hunt.

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PERSPECTIVE

An analysis of RVB's monthly survey
of its Dealer Advisory Board Members.

GAYLORD MAXWELL

The RV sales tide surges on. July was another boomer according to RVB's Dealer Advisory Board (DAB). Its members reported sales up 37% over last July. That's a bit less than the 45% increase for the year-to-date, but still a very impressive figure.

In terms of percentages, motorhomes are still the big winner (up 73% in new units). They are followed by fifth-wheels with a 57% unit increase, truck campers at 44%, travel trailers at 18% and camping trailers at 8%. Everybody is sharing in the upswing.

Used units generally are still holding strong. However, profits have dropped some. About half of the DAB members report them good now whereas earlier this year nearly everyone claimed they were excellent. Used motorhomes are still in big demand.

SALES VOLUME		
For Month	This year $ 7,899,480	+37%
	Last year $ 5,752,573	
Year to Date	This year $51,319,495	+45%
	Last year $35,511,096	

TOTAL UNIT SALES		
For Month	This year 670	+18%
	Last year 566	
Year to Date	This year 4173	+16%
	Last year 3606	

NEW UNIT SALES		
For Month	This year 438	+20%
	Last year 366	
Year to Date	This year 2775	+25%
	Last year 2216	

USED UNIT SALES		
For Month	This year 232	+16%
	Last year 200	
Year to Date	This year 1398	+ 1%
	Last year 1390	

MOTORHOMES

NEW	For Month	This year 107	+34%
		Last year 80	
	Year to Date	This year 701	+73%
		Last year 405	
USED	For Month	This year 7[illegible]	+14%
		Last year 66	
	Year to Date	This year 478	+ 6%
		Last year 450	

There don't seem to be any economic problems with the kind of people who want motorhomes. Not only are they buying, they're more often than not choosing a big one. Our DAB reports a preference for class A's. The motorhome business hasn't gotten cut-throat yet, either. The DAB reports profits excellent or good.

TRUCK CAMPERS

NEW	For Month	This year 16	- 6%
		Last year 17	
	Year to Date	This year 106	+ 9%
		Last year 97	
USED	For Month	This year 25	+44%
		Last year 17	
	Year to Date	This year 117	same
		Last year 117	

Although new unit sales are in the minus column, the 6% drop represents only 1% less than last July. Year-to-date, there's still an increase over last year. Used units are selling at exactly the same rate they were last year. Profits are rated good for July sales.

TRAVEL TRAILERS

NEW	For Month	This year 100	+30%
		Last year 77	
	Year to Date	This year 702	+18%
		Last year 597	
USED	For Month	This year 88	+13%
		Last year 78	
	Year to Date	This year 590	+11%
		Last year 533	

July saw one of the greatest monthly surges in trailer sales that we've seen in a long time. Families are getting back into the marketplace and more trailers are being sold for regular vacation purposes. Retirees are still buying the big ones. Profits have remained surprisingly strong for this time of the year when many dealers are closing out their '83 stock. Most dealers on the DAB gave a good rating to July grosses.

CAMPING TRAILERS

NEW	For Month	This year 187	+ 8%
		Last year 173	
	Year to Date	This year 1084	+ 8%
		Last year 1001	
USED	For Month	This year 36	- 8%
		Last year 39	
	Year to Date	This year 213	-13%
		Last year 245	

Sale of the fold-downs haven't been spectacular this year. However, they have managed to keep slightly ahead of '82 figures. Two members of the DAB are setting new records for themselves in this category. One will be well in excess of the 200-unit figure and the other will have more than 150.

FIFTH-WHEELS

NEW	For Month	This year 28	+ 47%
		Last year 19	
	Year to Date	This year 182	+ 57%
		Last year 116	
USED	For Month	This year 8	-100%
		Last year 4	
	Year to Date	This year 72	+ 60%
		Last year 45	

In terms of percentages, fivers are doing well. Only a few DAB members really push this type and they are getting excellent results. Of the 28 units sold during July, 18 were moved by two dealers.

SHIPMENTS

AFTERMARKET

CATEGORY	NO. UNITS SOLD
Antenna	1233
Auxiliary Battery	107
Awning	1146
Battery Isolator	734
Fluorescent Lights	1350
Generator	360
Portable Barbecue	55
Portable Toilets	1919
Roof Air-Conditioner	1040
Smoke Detector	45
Tire Carrier	867
Tire Pressure Gauge	323
Toilet Chemicals	37,034
Trailer Jacks	762
Vacuum Cleaner	15

Some of the figures turned in by our Aftermarket Advisory Board this month reflect seasonal changes, the effects of special sales and so forth. Sales of fluorescent lights, for example, ranged all the way from none to 1018; only one member of the board sold any generators, but he sold 360. Some other figures were similarly divergent. In addition to the charted figures, the two other most frequently reported aftermarket items were hitches (973) and storage pods (271). Also reported were refrigerators, roof vents, 3M connectors, car end wiring harness, H.D. flashers, steps, fans, sewer hoses and water heaters.

RVB is interested in making the *Aftermarket* figures work for you. You are invited to write in (*RVBusiness*, 29901 Agoura Road, Agoura, California 91301), or phone (213-991-4980, ext. 282, 245 or 237) to share your ideas with us as to how we can improve this service.

RVIA, JULY

The marketing committee of the Recreation Vehicle Industry Association has announced that the total number of recreational vehicles shipped from manufacturers' plants during July 1983 was 28,800 up 26.3% from July of 1982.

The shipment figures released by the association are contained in a report compiled for the membership by RVIA's marketing committee under the chairmanship of Allen Yoder Jr. of Jayco, Incorporated, Middlebury, Indiana.

RV shipments were as follows in July 1983		July 1982	Percent Change	Cumulative 1983	Cumulative 1982	Percent Change
TRAVEL TRAILERS	6300	4500	+40%	46,700	34,600	+35%
FIFTH-WHEELS	1600	1000	+60%	10,600	7100	+49.3%
TRUCK CAMPERS	700	600	+16.7%	4500	3800	+18.4%
MULTI-USE VEHICLES	12,300	10,500	+17.1%	92,900	64,900	+43.1%
TYPE A: MOTOR-HOMES	2700	1600	+68.8%	18,600	11,400	+63.2%
TYPE B: VAN CAMPERS	300	400	-25%	3200	2700	+18.5%
TYPE C: MINI MOTOR-HOMES	2600	1700	+52.9%	18,000	11,500	+56.5%
FOLDING CAMPING TRAILERS	2300	2500	-8%	24,000	22,600	+6.2%
TOTALS	28,800	22,800	+26.3%	218,500	158,600	+37.8%